

# An Investigation into the Components of the Construct of Forgiveness

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## Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work carried out under normal terms of supervision.

*The end of anything is better than its beginning.*

Ecclesiastes 7:8

*There is no one on earth who does what is right all the time and never makes a mistake.*

Ecclesiastes 7:20

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Geoffrey.

## Abstract

The last decade has witnessed a growing interest in theoretical and empirical studies into the construct of forgiveness. While research interest has focused on the application of forgiveness to therapy and counselling, the moral and ethical implications of forgiveness have been debated in philosophy and psychotherapy. However, there has been less interest in making a clear distinction between the content of forgiveness and the process of forgiving. This thesis explored the content, that is, a person's understanding or cognitive representation of the construct in the role of forgiver and forgiven. Finally, in the literature forgiveness is viewed as either a unidimensional or a multidimensional construct. Research into the content of the construct would clarify the issue of dimensionality.

A series of studies using an undergraduate population was conducted to establish the components of forgiveness in the forgiver and forgiven modes. Seven components were identified (Healing, Condoning, Relationships, Religious, Legal, New Beginning, and Guilt Reduction) and confirmed by factor analysis. This was a robust structure; gender, religiosity, willingness to forgive, and severity of transgression had a minimal influence.

A cross cultural study confirmed the same seven factor structure in both modes but indicated differences in variable loadings especially for the Condoning and Legal components. The final study showed that the profiles of the components were different across scenarios, indicating a multidimensional construct and that the type of forgiveness situation i.e., type of transgression and type of relationship, had a specific effect on responses to focus statements measuring the components.

The results show that it is important to separate the content of forgiveness from the process of forgiveness in order to identify the effect of variables on an understanding of the construct.

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## FOREWORD

The purpose of the thesis was to investigate the cognitive representation of forgiveness. A distinction was made between *content* and *process*. Content refers to a person's understanding of forgiveness i.e., their cognitive representation, while process indicates the progression from a conscious decision to forgive to the point where forgiveness is complete. In order to conduct a rigorous exploration of the construct a review was conducted of the contribution to the study of forgiveness of three disciplines, theology, philosophy, and psychology.

Theology provides a role model for the forgiver and to a lesser extent the forgiven and indicates how forgiveness redefines the relationship between the two. Thus the Judeo-Christian tradition is taken as the norm when making judgements about how the dyads should think, feel, and act towards each other and what forgiveness *means* to each party. The understanding of forgiveness identified in other world religions was also examined.

Philosophy in its dialogue with theology is concerned with forgiveness in relation to virtue theory and the motives of the forgiver. It tackles the problem of justice and the moral dilemma of allowing an immoral act to go unpunished. The philosophical approach is therefore more concerned with the perception of the forgiver and less with the forgiven. A further contribution of philosophy is to draw attention to the importance of language in understanding the construct.

It is only during the last twenty years that forgiveness has begun to be regarded as a subject relevant for psychological investigation. In this area the emphasis is placed on the forgiver and the health benefits which could accrue from forgiveness, particularly during counselling. Theoretical models, empirical studies, and measures of forgiveness which have developed and broadened the approach of early work are discussed. A framework is proposed which seeks to integrate the theological, philosophical, and psychological contributions to an understanding of forgiveness.

In order to investigate the cognitive representation of forgiveness it was necessary to create and test a scale of measurement. The empirical section is divided into two stages. The first stage involved devising a means of accessing the understanding of forgiveness.

The literature exhibits a common tendency to define the construct in terms of “what it is not”. This approach does not facilitate empirical confirmation or rejection. Therefore, it was decided to identify the components of forgiveness most commonly mentioned in the literature and words or phrases associated with them. Ultimately seven components of forgiveness with their focus phrases were identified which provided a measure of an individual’s understanding of forgiveness.

The second stage was to investigate the robustness of the components. First, a factor analysis was conducted to confirm the number of components and the loadings of variables on factors. It was then possible to investigate how the components functioned in two situations. First, a cross-cultural study was conducted in order to identify those components which were influenced by cultural norms and those components which were held in common across cultures. If forgiveness is an interpersonal strategy for dealing with damaging events then it was expected that most components would be held in common. The second study used scenarios to investigate how the nature of the transgression and the type of relationship e.g., communal or exchange, influenced responses to the components.

The discussion provides a review of the results of each study and the theoretical implications of the findings. The conclusion provides an outline of the main findings, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.



## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

*He who chooses revenge must dig two graves.*

Chinese Proverb

The purpose of this investigation is to explore people's understanding of forgiveness, that is, their cognitive representation. In other words, what do people mean when they use the term forgiveness? Is there just one, or a number of related ideas associated with the construct? It may be premature to explore the process of forgiveness without first establishing the content of the construct. Thus the distinctive element of the research is that it focuses on the content of forgiveness as distinct from the process of forgiving.

Current research is concerned with the way individuals undertake the process of forgiving an offender and less attention is given to the individual's cognitive representation of forgiveness. Thus, forgiveness theorists adopt various approaches to the definition of forgiveness. It is defined in terms of giving up resentment (Enright & Coyle, 1998), giving up anger (Fitzgibbons, 1998), replacing feelings of revenge or fear with empathy (Worthington, Jr., 1998), a coping strategy to deal with negative events (Pargament & Rye 1998), and grudge theory (Baumeister, Exline, & Sommer, 1998). These approaches all define forgiveness in terms of process and outcome. However, before a person can embark on the forgiveness process they will access their understanding of forgiveness, in other words, their forgiveness schema. Behaviour is influenced by one's cognitions, as Fiske & Taylor (1991) remark, "But most research in social cognition assumes that cognitions develop at least in part so that people will know how to behave." (p. 510). Therefore, in order to fully understand the process of forgiveness it is necessary to establish what people

mean by the term. For example, do people have the same cognitive representation irrespective of mode (forgiver or forgiven)? Or, is their understanding different across mode? Obviously the answer would have important theoretical and empirical implications.

Questions regarding the multidimensionality of forgiveness have not been resolved. Theorists refer to the components of forgiveness (Enright & Coyle, 1998, p.155; Newberg, d'Aquili, Newberg, & de Marici, 2000, p.105) but refer to them in general terms linked to the stages in the forgiving process. Enright and Coyle (1998) warn against reductionism by over simplifying the construct although in the same publication forgiveness is defined simply in terms of dealing with anger (Fitzgibbons, 1998).

The aims of the research address the issues discussed above by exploring three questions. The first concerns the dimensionality of the construct. Gorsuch & Hao's (1993) study claimed that forgiveness was multidimensional, however what they investigated was the process (forgiving) and not the cognitive representation (forgiveness). The multidimensionality they found refers to common factors that may be identified in the process stages. It is still to be established whether the construct of forgiveness is uni- or multidimensional.

The second aim makes a clear distinction between process and content. Concentrating on content in the empirical investigation does this. However, as content has implications for process the theoretical relationship between the two will be discussed.

Finally, to avoid reductionism and bias the third aim is to take account of the contribution of theology, philosophy, and psychology to the forgiveness debate. In fulfilment of these aims three objectives are identified.

The first objective is directed to the question of dimensionality, thus the components to which theorists refer need to be identified. The number of components would establish the dimensionality of the construct. In fact, identifying the components would be of practical use in both a clinical and non-clinical situation. It would provide a means of comparing an understanding of forgiveness amongst the general population, and within specific groups. For example, at present there is no research into the development of a forgiveness construct in children. It is possible that adults and children share the same cognitive representation and differ only in the way they actually forgive; adults having a wider experience of being damaged and damaging others. Individuals who experience particular difficulty with relationships e.g., victims of neglect or abuse, may differ in componential terms from the general population. Thus, to be able to identify the



components would provide an insight into the understanding of forgiveness and this would assist counsellors in guiding a client through forgiveness therapy.

The second objective is to make a distinction between individuals acting in the role of forgiver and forgiven. Social psychology has been criticised for its emphasis on individualisation (Stainton Rogers, Stenner, Gleeson, and Stainton Rogers, 1996, p. 28). This individualisation is also evident in forgiveness research. The emphasis has been on the forgiver, mainly the health benefits, which accrue to them through forgiveness. Only recently has this bias been acknowledged. McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen comment: "Because fairly little research has examined the contours of seeking or accepting forgiveness from others (Gassin, 1998; Meek, Allbright, and McMinn, 1995), the measurement of forgiveness from the perspective of the person who seeks or accepts forgiveness is similarly undeveloped." (p. 66). Studies, which include both modes, have failed to make a distinction between them in the discussion of their findings (Pollard, Anderson, Anderson, & Jennings, 1998).

Attention has not been directed to mode because the motivation of theorists has been directed towards producing a programme of forgiveness therapy for clients. Thus a bias has developed both in the direction of research and theoretical understanding. Individuals in their relationships may need to act in both roles, therefore it is important to establish whether there are any significant differences in representation for each role. It has been assumed that the role of the forgiver is paramount. However, writers have acknowledged that understanding the construct may come from being forgiven. Vitz and Mango (1997) stress the importance in therapy of taking account of "the patient's memories of forgiving or being forgiven." (p. 79). Perhaps the time has come to give equal weight to both modes in order to identify differences and similarities between them. Thus the third objective adopts a matching mode approach.

Finally, to establish the robustness of the concept other influential variables will be included in the studies: situational factors (time elapsed, identity of other); disposition factors (intention, and responsibility); personal factors (religiosity); and global factors (culture) to show that the construct is robust in the face of these variables.

There are a number of issues that need to be discussed related to the theoretical and empirical background of the research. There is the problem of identifying the kind of transgression that calls for a forgiveness response. If forgiveness is forthcoming how can it be differentiated in its effects from other types of behaviour? In other words, what are the causes and effects of forgiveness?



Unlike most literature in the area this thesis has chosen to look at people responding as a forgiver and one forgiven. The possible advantages and disadvantages of adopting this approach will be outlined.

The first task in undertaking the research was to decide on an appropriate method of investigation. Social psychology has a range of methods, which use quantitative or qualitative analysis. The rationale for choosing a questionnaire method will be reviewed.

The numerous 'models' of forgiveness generally fall into two categories, those, which describe the purpose behind the act of forgiveness, that is how the victim will benefit; or, a detailed description of the various stages in the process of forgiveness. The relationship between models and the componential approach will be discussed.

The final section reviews the whole question of why anyone would even consider forgiveness in the face of a severely damaging act and give up the opportunity to "get even". In many respects forgiveness defies common sense and logic.

### The Forgiveness Option

Relationships with close relatives and friends provide the most important relational experiences for individuals. Zaretsky (1976) writing about the place of the family in a capitalist society regarded it as "the crucible in which our emotional life first takes shape and throughout life is the major institution in our society in which we expect to be recognised and cared for, for ourselves." Research suggests that such social interactions be directed towards achieving positive emotions and avoiding negative ones (Argyle, 1994, p.132). One cause of negative emotions is when a person commits a transgression or damaging act so that the relationship is threatened, or ended. The type and severity of behaviour which constitutes a transgression in the literature is diverse, ranging from minor misdemeanours e.g., arguments, letting someone down, to severe acts such as infidelity, violence, and abuse.

Individuals may use a variety of strategies to come to terms with transgressions (depending on the degree of severity) and according to equity theory will weigh up the costs and benefits of each strategy; the cost-benefit balance for each of the following: leaving a relationship; re-negotiating a relationship; denial; reattribution; revenge; and forgiveness. Many of these strategies are accompanied by feelings of anger, guilt, or shame and these constitute the cost side of the equation for strategies other than forgiveness.



When people need a relationship they will try to sustain it in its present or slightly modified form.

Thibaut and Kelley (1959) identified four types of relationships within the social exchange model namely, sampling, bargaining, commitment, and institutionalisation. The first two types of relationships are characterised by keeping account of costs and rewards. The last two, especially institutionalisation devote more attention to the interrelationship and would involve forgiveness. Sternberg (1987) in his discussion of equity ignores the possibility of forgiveness as a response to transgressions. Consequently the only alternative is for the partner to exit the relationship. Similarly, Duck (1998 p. 94) does not mention forgiveness in his four phases describing relationship breakdown. In his intra-psychic phase costs and benefits are examined to determine whether the relationship is worth keeping. In the second phase, the dyadic phase, Duck suggested various options i.e., confront the person, leave the relationship, avoid the person, withdraw, and renegotiate the relationship. Interestingly he fails to mention forgiveness as an important interpersonal strategy, which must take place prior to any possible renegotiation. Thus the ending of relationships seems almost inevitable when costs outweigh rewards, or the balance becomes lopsided, especially if forgiveness is left out as a means of maintaining the relationship.

The continual striving for a cost-benefit balance may almost inevitably lead to a termination of the relationship. While strategies such as denial, or re-attribution, may involve a covering over or suppression of the hurt and anger with mental, and physical implications, for a person's well being (Davenport, 1991). On the other hand, revenge can place a person (and possibly close others) in an endless and escalating cycle of fear and retaliation; the purpose is to equalise the incongruence resulting from an injury (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000, p. 96). It is when these strategies are no longer sustainable that individuals may seek an alternative solution. The motivation may be because the person is: trapped in the past; endlessly rehearsing the event to maintain feelings of anger or revenge; or, they no longer wish to maintain the role of victim. Forgiveness has the advantage that it provides a positive strategy. None of the other strategies mentioned above provides a way of reducing negative affect or offering a way of repairing the relationship. In addition, forgiveness may be a means of restoring the asymmetry of power. Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma (1973) claimed that in a conflict situation "when a person is on the wrong end of the asymmetry of power he must rely on



the weapons of the weak.” (p. 108). It may be that “the weapons of the weak” is forgiveness between dyads of different status or power e.g., parents and adult children.

In some respects the literature does implicitly acknowledge forgiveness. Gergen, Greenberg, and Willis (1980) commented that “...love is frequently used to reciprocate friends...” (p. 88). While according to Gouldner (1973) and Boulding (1973) there is provision in relationships for imbalanced exchanges. For example, perceived dependency in a partner may elicit prosocial responses. The norm of social responsibility according to Hewstone, Stroebe, and Stephenson (1996) “prescribes that individuals should aid other people who are dependent on their help.” (p. 391). In other words, forgiveness may be a means of escaping the endless striving for balance. Forgiveness accepts the imbalance and is the means of maintaining the relationship, possibly without a major renegotiation.

Dindia and Baxter (1987) found that couples who had been married for a long time tended to adopt fewer maintenance strategies than those in short duration relationships. Their comment was, “...they simply didn’t notice them any more” (p. 89). A more likely explanation, than one, which postulates automatic and unconscious responses, is that couples had a forgiveness strategy in place, which facilitated repair and maintenance. Fennell (1993) reported that willingness to forgive and be forgiven was one of the ten most important characteristics of stable, happy first marriages. “...if forgiveness is not available in the marriage, an unpleasant tension may permeate the relationship. Moreover, if a spouse is unable to accept forgiveness, his or her guilt could damage the marriage relationship.” (p. 458).

If forgiveness is regarded as a “gift” from forgiver to forgiven then the cost will be high for the forgiver as they waive any right to recompense, restitution, or punishment. However, the benefits may outweigh the costs: the forgiver is able to move on from the past; they no longer play the role of victim; other relationships are no longer affected; if the relationship is restored social support is again experienced. It may not even be necessary for the offender to be present e.g., they may have died, or moved away (in these cases reconciliation will not be possible).

Alternatively, forgiveness may be seen as involving both parties co-operating to arrive at a common goal. In which case the offender must be made aware of their responsibility, be able to offer an apology, and be prepared to accept forgiveness. If an apology is forthcoming from the offender then forgiveness is easier (North, 1998). Problems arise when no apology is offered, and the transgression is denied or ignored. Whichever position is adopted, gift or negotiation, both parties need to be able to access



their own cognitive representation of forgiveness before they embark on the forgiveness process. A misunderstanding of forgiveness and what the process entails may lead to a failure to forgive, or a failure to address all the relevant issues (pseudoforgiveness). It is possible that only a forgiveness strategy offers the possibility of improved physical, emotional, and mental well-being for both the victim and the perpetrator (for a discussion of 'Forgiveness and Health', see Thoresen, Harris, & Luskin, 2000, chapter 12).

To conclude, the underlying cause of forgiveness is the experience of a damaging event. The break down of a close relationship may result in anxiety and/or depression and the undermining of an individual's health. Forgiveness in effect may play a role similar to that of positive emotions, in promoting mental and physical well being. An interest in the cognitive understanding and behavioural outcomes of forgiveness is pertinent in both a clinical and general population. In both areas forgiveness may enable an individual to overcome relational problems which may have undermined their physical and emotional well being.

However, at present the effects of forgiveness as an alternative strategy for dealing with damaging events in dyadic relationship have not been acknowledged in mainstream psychology. Psychologists have yet to recognise the way people in real-life use forgiveness as a *prosocial facilitator* i.e., as a mechanism for maintaining, renewing, or renegotiating relationships to facilitate a reconciliation (within certain safeguards). Thus there is no mention of the construct in the index of introductory texts to psychology (such as Myers, 1993; Gray, 1994; Hayes, 1994; Smith & Mackie, 2000); nor in social psychology textbooks dealing with interpersonal relationships (e.g., Pennington, 1986; Duck, 1993; Hinton, 1993; Jamieson, 1998). Hope's (1987) comment, "forgiveness is a term that is rarely written about in therapeutic literature" (p. 240) describes the situation in social psychology, although the position is changing in counselling with the 1990s witnessing important publications (Enright & North, 1998; Worthington, 1998; McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen 2000), and even warrants a mention in Duck (1999) "...though there is a recent growth of attention to the matter of forgiveness in relationships and to the issue of improving ways of dealing with disloyalty and betrayal (Kelley, 1997)" (p. 99).

### The Role of Forgiver and Forgiven

A review of the literature revealed that the usual approach is to emphasise the role of the forgiver and treat that of the forgiven as of secondary importance. It is necessary to adopt a matching mode approach if a complete picture of forgiveness is to be achieved. Focusing



on one mode, giving it greater value, importance, and attention builds in a bias to any attempt to understand both the content and process of forgiveness.

Attribution theory has identified the self-enhancement motive, which is explained by both the cognitions and the motivations of an individual. Augoustinos and Walker (1995) state, "...people take credit for success and deflect responsibility for failure because doing so makes them feel good and look good; it serves a self-enhancement." (p. 90). Applied to forgiveness, a person may respond quite differently in the role of forgiver. Here they are acting in a pro-social and socially desirable way, in the role of forgiven they are accepting and acknowledging their unsociable, undesirable, and negative behaviour.

Individuals are called upon to act in both roles. A single approach provides only half a picture. For example, Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) identified six different types of forgiveness e.g., revengeful forgiveness to intrinsic forgiveness based on Kohlberg's six stages of moral development. These six stages were applied to the forgiver mode but not to the forgiven mode. The question is, would it be possible for a person to operate at an intrinsic stage in the forgiven mode but a revengeful one as a forgiver? Unless a whole person approach is adopted, looking at the person operating in both modes, questions like this cannot be resolved. It is important because in a real-life situation a person's cognitive representation of forgiveness will have implications for their attitude to the process of forgiveness, and therefore their behaviour. Thus using the example above, someone may be very willing to accept forgiveness but equally unwilling to offer it without inflicting punishment or receiving recompense from the offender. Such *behavioural flexibility* (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 512) is not unusual and does not necessarily result in feelings of negative arousal. A whole person approach may provide information about people's understanding of forgiveness, which is more in keeping with real-life and would avoid placing a greater value on one mode without any theoretical or empirical support.

Second, research into accounts and negative behaviour has focused on the response of the offender to negative behaviour, offering denials, concessions, and excuses. In this respect the bias has been in the opposite direction to counselling and therapy in that it has ignored the responses of the offended; forgiveness was not regarded as an option. However, once forgiveness is included as an interpersonal strategy then any investigation into accounts would need to include the attitudes people adopt towards different types of accounts when they are acting as forgiver and forgiven. Again, this has implications for behaviour.



Third, in counselling forgiveness has value because of the resulting health benefits for the victim. This approach has skewed attention onto the forgiver, so that the client is able to operate a forgiveness strategy, even in isolation from the transgressor. This individualistic approach has directed the development of both theoretical and empirical models in the literature. In some respects this is because the cognitive representation of forgiveness has been seen as secondary to process. If, in fact, the value of forgiveness lies in its interpersonal facilitation it is important to investigate how a person understands and operates forgiveness in both modes.

Fourth, in much of the forgiveness counselling literature the role of the forgiver is modelled on the Divine, and as a consequence the role of the forgiven is often omitted, or ignored. The Early Church's insistence on outward signs of remorse and changed behaviour as evidence of repentance is ignored and any demands on the offender before forgiveness is offered are regarded as unforgiving behaviour (North, 1998). The importance of each role is not emphasised. The reason is probably because in the Divine scenario model the roles are not between equals as they are in real-life. As a consequence, the forgiver is perceived as the subject (playing an active role) and the forgiven the object (playing a passive role). However, Divine forgiveness offers a means of restoring the relationship (between God and the person) which has been severed. Both roles have to be understood to make sense of the construct.

In everyday life individuals cause damage to others and also experience damage at the hands of significant others in the context of close relationships. Any investigation into the cognitive representation of forgiveness must take account of how individuals understand the construct in each role. First, because the experience in one role may well affect how an individual acts in the opposite role. Second, the greater influence of one role over the other is assumed, and needs to be empirically investigated. At present, there is no evidence to support the assumption. In fact, the reverse may be the case. If a child has never experienced forgiveness they may not have a clear understanding of what is involved and so be unable to forgive.

To sum up, the reasons for using the matching model is that it provides a more realistic picture of how a person operates in the real world of interpersonal relationships. Second, the relationship between the two roles has not yet been investigated. Third, there is no evidence to support or refute the assumption that a person's cognitive representation is the same in both modes.



### Choosing a Method of Accessing the Construct of Forgiveness

Manstead and Semin (1996, in Hewstone et al. 1996) state that, "Methods provide a means of translating a researcher's ideas into actions." (p. 75). The "idea" behind this research was the question, "What do people understand when they use the word, forgiveness?" The question originated from the literature dealing with the problems people encountered when they tried to forgive an offender for a damaging act. Did the understanding of forgiveness which underpinned the theoretical and empirical studies actually represent a cognitive representation as opposed to a behavioural response? Was it possible to distinguish between the content (abstract concept) and the process of forgiveness, or were they almost synonymous? In order to address these questions a decision had to be made about which measure to adopt to investigate a person's understanding of forgiveness. There are a number of different methods of measuring abstract concepts such as forgiveness.

Discourse analysis is one means of accessing an individual's cognitions. The individual's own words are accessed through the use of open-ended interviews, focus groups, or recording an individual's conversation. However, the techniques of discourse analysis or account analysis are better suited to studying actual forgiving behaviour. For example, account analysis is appropriate to an investigation of forgiveness as an illocutionary speech act (Haber, 1991). Account analysis would be time consuming and closer to a case study method with its attendant problems of generalisation. However, focus groups have the advantage of accessing lay knowledge and how people actually use and understand concepts (Heider, 1958). This was the method used by Halling (1994). Experts were not used (cf. Subkoviak et al., 1995) because they bring their own particular bias, for example, Hargrave and Sells (1997) based their questionnaire on Hargrave's (1994) theoretical framework.

Two other techniques were considered, the Role Construct Repertory Test (Rep Test) developed by Kelly (1955, 1963, 1970) and the Semantic Differential developed by Osgood et al. (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) (see Anastasi & Urbina, 1997, p. 459 ff). The Semantic Differential has a scale to rate concepts on bipolar adjectives. This would not have identified the content of forgiveness. The Rep Test would be of interest after the components were identified. These techniques simply produce a discourse, which is difficult to measure and analyse. It would also involve training judges. Some investigators restrict themselves to the discourse, other to a content analysis of the discourse, and others use it as a first stage to construct a questionnaire. This investigation chose focus groups followed by a questionnaire method, for the reasons discussed below.



The final alternative was to adopt a self-report method. Manstead and Semin (1996, p. 96 quoted in Hewstone, Stroebe, & Stephenson, 1996) list the advantages of self-report measures e.g., avoids the problems associated with laboratory and observational methods. The two methods of collecting self-report data are interviews and questionnaires (Manstead & Semin, 1996, p. 98). As the research was breaking new ground interviews would have been time consuming. They are also notoriously unreliable unless highly structured when they begin to resemble a verbal questionnaire.

The second self-report method was the questionnaire, which is widely used, in social-psychological research. Manstead and Semin (1996, p. 98) suggest that for certain investigations this is the only method which could have been used, for example, Folkman and Lazarus' (1985) study of stressful events. In other instances ethical and practical considerations mean that participants cannot be assigned to experimental conditions. Stroebe, Stroebe, and Domittner (1988) in their study of bereavement could not allocate individuals to a "bereaved" and "non bereaved" condition. Similarly with forgiveness research there are restrictions because of ethical and practical implications (subjects could not be allocated to a "forgiven" and "unforgiven" condition). As Manstead and Semin point out, "the choice of research strategy is often a compromise between what is optimal and what is practicable." (p. 83). Questionnaires have both advantages and disadvantages. A large number of participants can be used with the minimum of expense. With a sensitive subject such as forgiveness anonymity is essential e.g., to reduce social desirability responses. The downside is the response rate, which in some studies can vary from 10% to 50% (Manstead & Semin, p. 98). In addition, reliability and validity are important issues, together with the danger of ambiguous questions or participants' misunderstanding of a question. Manstead and Semin suggest an average of two (or more) items to measure a construct. Finally, they stress the importance of pilot work in constructing a new questionnaire.

Having reviewed alternative methods it was decided that a questionnaire would be the most fruitful approach to investigating an individual's understanding of the construct of forgiveness.

### Components and Models

According to Harre (1993) "A model, as physicists and chemists understand the term, is an analogue or simulation of some real structure or process." (p. 96). In his discussion of models he suggests because the reality being investigated cannot be observed, or



adequately described using language, a model of reality is devised. Etchemendy (1988:95) states, "Models are just abstract representations of the world as it is, and as it might have been [or could be]." (as quoted in Harre, 1993, p. 96). Models are useful means of understanding behaviour. However, there are problems associated with models. There is a tendency to become "model bound", that is, the understanding of a problem is interpreted in terms of the model. For example, the medical model underpinned the understanding of what was referred to as mental illness for many years.

The research conducted into forgiveness has used models based on different approaches to forgiveness to explain the process of forgiveness and how the action of forgiving benefits the forgiver e.g., anger, (Fitzgibbons, 1998); coping (Pargament & Rye, 1998); empathy (Worthington, Jr., 1998). Each model is based on a single premise. Thus it is possible to choose one model in preference to another. Each model focuses on one particular aspect of forgiving behaviour. In order to develop an overall theoretical framework some understanding of the components of the construct is necessary.

The components of forgiveness relate to different dimensions of forgiveness and may operate at the same time. Thus, the components represent the constituent parts of forgiveness and together constitute a model of the content of the construct.

This research attempts to provide a model which is applicable to both content and process (see Diagram 6:1, page 100). In other words, the components provide the building blocks for a comprehensive model of the construct of forgiveness.

### The Presence of Forgiveness in Society

The question still remains "How can we account for forgiveness in society?" One possible explanation is that forgiveness has evolutionary antecedents. In other words, those individuals or groups who responded to an uncooperative response with a co-operative one might have stopped a possible cycle of aggression while ensuring a co-operative response in the future. It might be that forgiveness rather than revenge was a more useful strategy for dealing with negative behaviour. Taking the historical existence of man as a whole, aggressive responses may be a relatively recent development and not representative of the kind of responses typical in close knit groups, or small communities. If people do share a common understanding of forgiveness, even in a different culture, this may indicate that some form of forgiveness has always been practised in close relationships.

It is possible to identify the event, which changed forgiveness from a strategy for dealing with damaging events within close relationships to a wider circle of people. Under



Constantine (early fourth century) the Christian Church was united to the secular state; (The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1958, p. 334) forgiveness, via the Church, entered the secular world, albeit with religious strictures and social norms. Forgiveness took on a wider meaning, which involved intrapersonal e.g., repentance, change of heart, and interpersonal action e.g., forgiving others as a duty. Thus it is possible to trace the historical roots of forgiveness to religious teaching and practice in those countries influenced by Christianity. Countries with a different religious tradition e.g., India or China will have a different view of forgiveness (see Appendix A for a review of world religions and forgiveness).

The presence of forgiveness in society may be explained by the idea of a collective representation of concepts within society suggested by social representation theory (Moscovici, 1981). Augoustinos & Innes (1990) suggested that people's perception and categorisation of reality comes directly from the "ideas, thoughts, images, and knowledge which members of a collectivity share." (p. 215). In other words, meaning is socially received. Moscovici (1981) regards:

...a set of concepts, statements and explanations originating in daily life in the course of inter-individual communications. They are the equivalent, in our society, of the myths and belief systems in traditional societies; they might even be said to be the contemporary version of common sense. (p.181).

Forgiveness may be regarded as having its origins in a theistic society and as such became a collective way of viewing the world in terms of relationships with the Divine and fellow human beings. The concept is used to make sense of events, which are negative in outcome, to respond appropriately to them, and to be able in the future to control and predict the negative behaviours of others.

Forgiveness might now be seen as coming full circle. In evolutionary terms it was probably a repair and maintenance strategy in the restricted social context of kin and close relations. The next stage occurred when the construct was 'Christianised' and acquired religious connotations, rules, and specific behavioural responses. Christian forgiveness was accepted by contemporary Roman secular society as highly desirable. During the last decade the construct has become increasingly secularised. Writers have stripped forgiveness of its religious connotations and approached it as a mechanism for relational



repair. Although some therapists still retain religious (Christian) associations in their approach to forgiveness therapy.

Forgiveness remains a paradox. As Mowrer (quoted in Mauger et al., 1992) suggested it defies logic and can appear to be immoral or unjust, allowing an offender to go unpunished (Murphy & Hampton, 1990). However, a world without forgiveness would be dire indeed (Arnold, 1997). The following examples show how forgiveness is experienced by individuals, by groups, and society.

### The Experience of Forgiveness

In the academic arena the 1990s witnessed a growth of interest in the construct of forgiveness and this interest has been reflected in society in general. Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, & Freedman (1992a) identified the range of perspectives of those in the helping professions who were investigating forgiveness, "Psychiatrists (Kaufman, 1984), pastoral counselors (Cunningham, 1985), counseling psychologists (Eastin, 1989, Hebl, 1990) clinical psychologists (Coleman, 1989, Fitzgibbons, 1986, Hope, 1987) humanistic writers (Jampolsky, 1985) and developmental psychologists (Enright, Santos, & Al-Mabuk, 1989)" (p. 84).

Alongside texts by therapists the importance of forgiveness at an individual level began to catch the public interest with stories of personal injury and reconciliation. In his book, *The Railway Man* Eric Lomax (1996) recounts the torture he suffered at the hands of his Japanese captors during World War II. The climax of his story is the meeting, fifty hate-filled years later with his interrogator Nagase, who desired forgiveness from Eric Lomax. The final moving pages recount the emotional journey for both men, and the final decision to forgive. The author ends his book with the words, "Sometime the hating has to stop." (p. 276). The negative emotions, which had burdened him for fifty years, were replaced by positive feelings of compassion and empathy. Examples of this kind indicate how forgiveness may offer an alternative response, which enables the individual to overcome negative affects and face the future in a more optimistic frame of mind.

Forgiveness is not only applicable at the micro level but also at the macro level. Henderson (1996) identifies a *forgiveness factor*. In his book of the same title he describes initiatives within the secular world to resolve political and social conflict through meeting together to discuss conflicts and engage in a process of forgiveness.

However, the avoidance of conflict and the achievement of reconciliation between warring factions is only achieved through the intervention of individuals who have



themselves forgiven and in so doing were able to establish a mutual trust. In other words, the course of international politics is determined to an unknown extent by interpersonal relationships between relevant influential dyads in the political scenario. The final outcome of the decision to forgive appears to be the same at the micro and the macro level, which benefit those immediately involved and has ramifications for the wider community. In both instances negative affects are replaced by positive ones. In other words, negotiation takes place at the micro level and others, including the community, are asked to buy into the agreement.

Thus Ogawa (1998) discusses the way relations between North Korea and Japan could be repaired. The first stage took place at an interpersonal level between "...men of vision and political courage on both sides..." (1965, 1998, p. 43). "But the final chapter requires the greater population as its most difficult task to be accomplished: it requires the power of apology and forgiveness." (p. 43). If Japan offers a 'genuine apology' then repair can take place at a national level if the Korean people forgive Japan. As Ogawa explains, "apology is a one-way street but forgiveness is a two-way street that will bring new relations." (p. 43).

The Media in the last few years has taken an interest in the interplay between revenge and forgiveness (Japanese POWs in *The Times*, May, 1998). When violent or emotionally damaging incidents take place the victim's reactions to the perpetrator is usually to express a desire for revenge and/or a just punishment. If the punishment seems to be unduly lenient then this deepens into a sense of betrayal. However, there are instances when a victim will express a desire to forgive the transgressor. Such a response is distinctive, it attracts more attention and a dispositional attribution is made (Jones, 1990). For example, the work of Father Adolpho Bachelet among former members of the Red Brigade is an interesting example of the possible effect of forgiveness (Jordan, 1988). The public forgiveness of the members of the Red Brigade by the family of the murdered Judge Aldo Moreno played a major role in the demise of that movement. Forgiveness in this instance stemmed directly from the family's Christian faith, but individuals may be motivated by different factors. In other words, no single variable may be responsible for a person adopting a forgiveness strategy in interpersonal relations, it may well be a combination of variables i.e., upbringing, culture, religiosity, personality, and perception of self.

### Multi-disciplinary Concept

Forgiveness, as already stated has theological origins. However, both philosophy and psychotherapy have augmented its meaning as it has been applied in their respective areas. The researcher needs to be aware that the language people use to express their understanding of forgiveness may be different, i.e., between victim and transgressor. In addition, many academic definitions are often only valuable within the specialist domain in which they were conceived and may not be easily understood by the layperson. What is required to facilitate research is a more generally applicable definition of forgiveness. The researcher needs to be aware that in trying to define the term allowance has to be made for the different emphases that the victim and the transgressor may have. An academic understanding of the term may not necessarily agree with the layman's perspective. Therefore, what would be valuable would be a definition derived from people's understanding of forgiveness as applied in their everyday life i.e., based on a naive psychology.

Enright et al. (1992a) suggest that some therapists have a negative view of forgiveness based on a misunderstanding of the term. For example, Forward (1989) equates forgiveness erroneously (according to Enright et al. 1992a, p. 89-90) with "overlooking" or pseudoforgiveness (denial, condonation). Forgiveness according to this premise is dangerous to the person and therefore falsely rejected as tied into reconciliation and repentance. At present there is no commonly accepted definition amongst those in the field. In fact some researchers fail to define exactly what they mean and take the meaning of forgiveness as a "given" and launch straight into attitude and process. This failure to distinguish between variables is not uncommon in research. Baumeister et al. (1994) note that in guilt research there was a similar failure to distinguish between the concepts of guilt and shame.

Efforts to construct simple definitions of guilt are plagued by the fact that people use the term in multiple and conflicting ways. In particular, people use shame and guilt interchangeably, even though the terms refer to distinct and distinguishable experiences (p. 245).

Gonzales, Manning, & Haugan (1992) who make the same point regarding the confusion between the concepts of severity and responsibility echo this criticism. This lack of precision in terminology is also evident in forgiveness research. Cronbach (1955) in his



seminal papers on accuracy research drew attention to the failure of psychologists to distinguish between variables which had implications for interpreting their data, that is, no conclusions could be drawn because it was not clear which variable was being measured. One reason for the lack of precision is the relative newness of the research; mention has already been made of the paucity of publications prior to the 1990s. It still lacks an integrated theoretical framework that can account for the different models of forgiveness.

Researchers approach forgiveness as a simple concept or a multidimensional construct. If the former view is taken researchers appear to adopt a very restricted view of forgiveness, using a single word definitions i.e. pardoning, condoning or denial (Forward, 1989). Other writers include both negative and positive terminology (Haber, 1991) and contrast concepts which they regard as not part of forgiveness with ones which they do. This is not a satisfactory basis for deriving testable empirical hypotheses within psychology. It would be useful at this point to look at different approaches to the structure of the construct of forgiveness.

#### Approaches to the Structure of the Construct of Forgiveness

Psychologists' view of the structure of concepts has changed from the strictly classical view originally in vogue. This proposed that concepts were organised around necessary and sufficient defining features. However, problems arise when researchers attempt to identify these "necessary and sufficient" features. To adopt this approach to forgiveness would probably mean a rather rigid and inflexible understanding, which would fail to take account of factors such as culture and environment. In addition, all components would have to be present for a person to have a complete understanding of forgiveness.

The probabilistic view of concepts is that they are organised loosely around typical, but not defining features. (Kunda, 1999). Forgiveness would then include components, which are "typical", and others, which are borderline. This would give a more flexible approach, take account of other factors such as culture and environment, and provide the possibility of components changing in salience.

The summary representation has been described in terms of prototypes and exemplars. A prototype is an abstracted list of features. While an exemplar is a representation of instances one has encountered. Both views rely on the similarity principle (Malt, 1989; Medin, Goldstone, & Gentner, 1993, see Hewstone, Stroebe, & Stephenson, 1996, p. 115). Neumann (1974) suggests that the two could usefully be combined and that there is not a great deal of difference between the two approaches. While Bourne et al.



(1979) suggest that, "each perspective is useful for different kinds of research" (p. 151). The question of how people categorise forgiveness has not been addressed. Do people have a particular prototype or "ideal" example of forgiveness? The Crucifixion would be a prototype example of forgiveness in a Christian context. Therefore acts of forgiveness would be compared to the prototype at encoding. The exemplar view on the other hand argues that abstraction takes place during retrieval. A further refinement of the model is the proposal (Smith, 1988, 1990; Smith & Medin, 1981) that a category may have a core "which is a set of sufficient and necessary conditions." (Hewstone, Stroebe, & Stephenson, 1996, p. 115). In other words, there may be certain defining characteristics (the core) which are an essential part of the category and arise from folk psychology or naive theories about the world (Murphy & Medin, 1985; Wattenmaker, Nakamura, & Medin, 1988). These theories may not be accurate or even correct; it is sufficient that they try to give meaning and structure. The prototype or ideal may well be the Crucifixion for the minority group of believers, but the concept has, and indeed needs to have, a wider application. It must have meaning for those of others faiths, or no faith. It is possible that the core has some elements which may be universal and common to mankind, while peripheral elements of the schema may arise from other factors i.e., culture, practice, value systems within a community.

Rosch et al. (1976) suggests that there are three levels of concepts. There are superordinate concepts (animal), basic level concepts (cats) and lower level subordinate concepts (Russian Blue cats). Inclusion is on the basis of features, which are informative, distinctive and involve movements or actions. In other words, we distinguish between levels on the basis of actions. The emphasis on actions and interactions with the environment bring Rosch's model closer to the idea of schema (Hayes, 1994, p. 151). Based on Rosch's model forgiveness would be the superordinate level, the components of forgiveness the basic level and a means of accessing the components i.e. words or phrases describing actions or behaviour the subordinate level. Forgiveness would have a grand meaning or ideal prototype in the way it has become understood in secular society, which would incorporate different facets e.g., relationships, a new beginning, and guilt reduction.

Certainly the problem of ecological validity in researching forgiveness is a very pertinent one. Hayes' (1994) general comment strongly applies to forgiveness:

...until researchers can look at the ordinary ways that people use concepts in everyday living we will not be able to see how relevant any of this research (on categorisation) is.



People may use entirely different criteria in the 'real world' than they do when they are undertaking an abstract, context-free laboratory task, whether it is based on a naturally concept or not. (p. 152).

The structure of concepts is also represented as an associative network consisting of interconnected nodes. Activation spreads from each node through the web of concepts. This model applied to forgiveness would suggest that the components are linked together, and when a person accesses their concept the components are activated.

A further elaboration of the associative network model is the parallel-constraint-satisfaction model, which assumes that the nodes not only activate, but also deactivate their associates. In other words, there are excitatory and inhibitory links. The components would not only be activated, but depending on circumstances, certain components might be deactivated.

It is likely that forgiveness contains discrete concepts, which need to be identified; because of its multi-dimensional nature the term construct will be used to refer to forgiveness. The task of this research is to identify the concepts, which make up the construct of forgiveness.

Finally, the language, which is used to define forgiveness, is important. If the construct is to be accessed the language must be appropriate for the culture. The linguistic relativity hypothesis (Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis) is probably too strong, but due weight needs to be given to the fact that concepts are expressed within the boundaries of language.

### Present Position

#### Reasons for Rejection of Forgiveness by Social Psychology

The most often quoted reason for the lack of interest in the topic of forgiveness is its association with the Christian tradition (Pattison, 1965) and the bias this imposes on an understanding of the construct (Flanigan, 1998. p. 97). It was rejected on three points; (i) it was internal; (ii) represented religious belief, which was itself, suspect; (iii) it was not measurable statistically. These criticisms were associated with the traditional task of psychological research, the need to clearly define exactly what was being investigated. In most cases this refers to outwardly observable behaviour which is measurable. This is clearly a criticism emanating from the behaviourist tradition, with its emphasis on a "neo-mechanistic approach" to "internal states". In these terms forgiveness was a non-starter

(Giorgi, 1970). However, times have changed. The behaviourist tradition has itself become modified and in many ways superseded by the cognitive approach. For example, attribution theory is concerned with internal processes which influence the way stimuli in the environment are perceived, categorised and responded to by the individual.

Religious belief has received less attention in Britain than in Europe or America. Those influential in shaping psychology this century did not regard it as a valued area of investigation for reasons already stated. For example, Freud was not favourably disposed towards religion and was generally negative in his evaluation (Freud 1955/1991). Jung (1928) acknowledged the therapeutic benefits of religion, especially confession. The latter became linked with forgiveness and set therapists onto the Health Model of forgiveness, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. Today religious belief and its influence on an individual's behaviour are studied within the field of attitudes. According to Tajfel & Fraser (1978), "The aim of social psychology is to analyse and understand human and social behaviour, it is difficult to think of any perspective which is not relevant to it." (p. 17).

It would appear that forgiveness, as a form of behaviour within a social context between dyads is relevant to social psychology. It is one strategy among many e.g., denial or revenge, which people adopt when they respond to damaging events. In addition, it can no longer be assumed that forgiveness is solely a theological concept, as it is part of common parlance and understanding.

Finally, with sophisticated quantitative analysis available data is amenable to analysis. Forgiveness can no longer be excluded from social psychology on grounds of internality, religion or being unamenable to statistical analysis.

### Reasons for Re-newed Interest in Forgiveness

As has already been mentioned forgiveness was of interest within psychoanalysis because of its association with confession Jung (1928). It was argued that people needed to confess their wrongdoing, receive forgiveness from an authority figure and so experience relief from feelings of guilt (Todd, 1985). Initially the focus was intrapersonal, which was probably due to the influence of Jung, who was solely concerned with the relief from guilt for the individual and ignored the effect forgiveness might have on relationships within dyads. Currently two strands of research interest can be identified in psychotherapy. The first is in the positive effect of forgiveness for the individual - intrapsychic - with an emphasis on the health benefits derived through the reduction of negative affects, anger,



resentment and guilt. However, the 1980s witnessed a growing interest in the interpersonal effects of forgiveness and these were to have an important impact on research related to forgiveness.

Veenstra (1992) suggested that two particular developments within the caring professions initiated change. The first was the decision by the AA to expand their work to include the adult children of alcoholic parents (Ackerman, 1987; Middleton-Moz & Dwinell, 1986; Whitfield, 1987). The second was that therapists became interested in the use of forgiveness as a mechanism of release for patients who had been abused by their parents (Bass & Davis, 1988; Farmer, 1989). The use of forgiveness therapies has been the impetus behind a resurgence of interest in the whole area of forgiveness. This work has provided both diverse definitions and a description of the processes involved when a person forgives someone who has hurt them. One tangible result of the espousal of forgiveness by some practitioners within psychotherapy was an increase in publications. In fact, Enright et al., writing in 1992 were able to identify over 70 books on forgiveness (e.g., for the lay public, Coleman, 1989; Simon & Simon, 1990; for the Christian counsellor, Wilson, 1989; for specific areas such as cancer treatment, Phillips & Osborne, 1989; and for strategic family therapy, Madanes, 1990; cited in Veenstra, 1992, p.160).

A third factor may be the changing in attitude toward religious belief. Enright & Zell (1989) refer to the gradual “synthesis of theology and psychology”, (p. 52) initiated prior to 1980s through the work of Meehl (1958) and Strong's (1976). They used Christian models of counselling, which identified love and forgiveness as part of the therapeutic process. In response to these ideas there was a growing acknowledgement of the need to respect a client's religious beliefs and questioned the *perceived neutrality* (Di Blasio, 1988, p.127) of psychotherapy which tended to ignore a person's religious beliefs in therapy (Di Blasio, 1988, p.127). Pioneering work of the 1980s resulted in a growing interest in the therapeutic application of forgiveness within psychotherapy on an intrapersonal and interpersonal level (Augsburger, 1981; Smedes, 1984; Fitzgibbons, 1986; Hope, 1987; DiBlasio, 1988 Halling, 1994).

In order to ensure an adequate evaluation of the work on forgiveness, it is necessary to review the literature in three specific areas: theology; philosophy; and psychotherapy.



## CHAPTER 2

### DEFINITIONS OF FORGIVENESS

*Our initial concept of forgiveness, as an entity in itself, created problems. Not until we looked at forgiveness in terms of the hurt to oneself in a personal relationship did a specific direction emerge. (Rowe, Halling, Davies, Leifer, Powers, & van Bronkhorst, 1989, p. 237)*

Before reviewing the literature it would be useful to briefly discuss the various definitions of forgiveness. The usual sources for defining any term are dictionaries and the relevant forgiveness literature, which in the case of forgiveness included articles and books in theology, philosophy, and psychology. This technique is a fairly standard procedure among researchers (Pollard, Anderson, Anderson, & Jennings, 1998; Halling, 1994; Veenstra, 1992; Shontz & Rosenak, 1988; Hunter, 1978).

Dictionary definitions of forgiveness tend to be simplistic and by their very nature do not distinguish between 'genuine' forgiveness and 'pseudoforgiveness'. However, they do give a valuable list of related ideas. Shontz and Rosenak (1988) noted that, "Dictionaries provide a surprisingly wide variety of meanings for the word 'forgive'" (p. 23). Webster's dictionary definition is often quoted, "1) to give up resentment against or the desire to punish; to stop being angry with; to pardon; 2) to give up all claim to punish or exact a penalty for" (Benson, 1992, p. 78). Veenstra (1992) commented that, "A quick trip to the dictionary reveals that the lay public use 'forgiveness' as synonymous with absolve, acquit, cancel, clear, condone, excuse, overlook, pardon and release." (p. 160-161). Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, & Freedman (1992a) warn that to take a

definition of forgiveness exclusively from the dictionary is “a mistake if one seeks depth and breadth.” (p. 91). Certainly Webster's definition and others quoted above can be traced back to Bishop Butler's (1855) definition of the construct which has dominated forgiveness literature until very recently i.e., forgiveness as overcoming resentment.

Hunter (1978) discussed the derivation of the term from the Old English word “forgifan” or “foreifan”. He quoted the dictionary definition as “1. to cease to cherish displeasure toward; excuse, 2. to forego the penalty for: remit, as a debt. 3. To show forgiveness; grant pardon, condone, think no more of, let bygones by bygones, shake hands, let off, remit. Its single antonym is given as ‘retaliation’” (p. 167). The forgiver is the subject and the forgiven is treated as the object. Language implies a unilateral direction to forgiveness. Hunter also drew attention to the use of forgiveness in regard to cancelling debt. The term is currently used by creditor nations to refer to Third World debt. Debtor nations reject the term because they do not accept they have done anything morally wrong which requires forgiveness.

The literature provides as many definitions as there are researchers. However, broad categories or components of forgiveness can be identified which rely on the theological (Judeo-Christian) tradition, philosophical literature, or both.

### Definitions of Forgiveness

#### Defined in Terms of Anger and Resentment

The first set of definitions emphasised the concepts of anger and revenge. Forgiveness was defined, as overcoming anger and replacing negative feelings of anger and revenge with positive affect, even love. Thus, Brandsma (1982) talked of “collecting anger stamps, organizing them into books, and waiting to ‘cash them in’ at propitious times.” (p. 42). The strong, negative affect was essentially intrapsychic and associated with heightened anxiety e.g., clients who have suffered emotional traumas as abused children, or through dysfunctional family relationships. The emphasis was on “forgiveness as a therapeutic resource” (Brandsma, 1982, p. 299). Brandsma suggested that this be achieved through “restructuring” by which he meant a changed cognitive perspective of the offender.

Coate (1994) viewed forgiveness in a similar way when she spoke of forgiveness as “essentially something about changing inner dispositions” (p. 87). Cunningham (1985)



preferred the term 'reframing', which referred to altered feelings, conceptualisations, and meaning towards the offender. For him "Forgiveness is a punctilious event, a decision, an act of the will...a critical moment of commitment." (p. 146). Durham (1990) continued this theme of the "battle between revenge and forgiveness" (p. 131) so that for her forgiveness was "the antithesis of chronic vindictiveness" (p. 134). She likened forgiveness to the process of mourning, letting go the desire for vengeance "which is heavenly, or supremely admirable" (p. 135) so that the psychological "slate" was "wiped clean" (p. 136). Forgiveness, for Durham, has an "other" quality. Perhaps Pettitt (1987) who regarded the overcoming of resentment as a means of healing, living, and dying healthily, succinctly expressed this "high view" of forgiveness. "Forgiveness is beyond emotion. It is a mental and spiritual act of the will. It is a higher use of the will than using it to repress negative feelings...." (p. 181). All these authors identified forgiveness within a Christian perceptive and thus imbued it with a "special" quality.

This restrictive way of defining forgiveness only identified the purely intrapsychic affect of anger and resentment. It largely ignored the cognitive aspects, except in terms such as reframing or restructuring. The claim of improved health benefits has still to be unequivocally established by research, as Thoresen, Harris, and Luskin (2000) state; "no controlled studies have yet reported improved physical health in persons with major diseases." (p. 254). However, to maintain that forgiveness "is beyond emotion", or is "heavenly" places the construct in the theological realm and ignores the breadth of usage revealed in dictionaries. The trend in recently published literature is away from this narrow definition with its internal bias, towards an emphasis on the interpersonal aspects of the construct.

### An Interpersonal Definition

It was the very restrictive nature of the above definition, which led the Human Development Study Group (1991) to state, "A definition that exclusively emphasises forgiveness as the reduction of negative emotions may lead clients away from resentment or hatred but into a cold neutrality that is not forgiveness." (p. 494). Their research adopted an interpersonal approach to forgiveness, although still emphasising the health advantages (cognitive, affective, and behavioural) for the forgiver.

Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, and Freedman (1992a) offered eight guiding principles for effective counselling programmes in forgiveness. They stated that, "...forgiveness is interpersonal. Even though the forgiveness transformations are primarily internal, the fruition of forgiveness is entering into loving community with others...." (p. 99). Augsburger (1981) wrote, "Forgiveness is not an end in itself, but the opening of a self to join with others in loving community." (p. 71). The inclusion of love (agape) is claimed to rescue forgiveness from a cold neutrality.

Enright, Freedman, and Rique (1998) restated the definition of forgiveness which underpinned the research of Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) based on North (1987) as abandoning the right to "resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her." (pp. 46-47). However, in one respect they follow the approach of those researchers (Downie, 1965; Kolnai 1973-4; Brandsma, 1982; Hope, 1987) who defined forgiveness solely in terms of overcoming resentment. They all over-emphasised the intrapersonal and underestimated the interpersonal application of the construct.

#### What Forgiveness Means and does not Mean in Interpersonal Relationships

Enright, Gassin, and Wu (1992b), based their forgiveness approach on an adaptation of Kohlberg's (1976) stages of justice and Piaget's (1932) concept of reciprocity (Enright and the Human Development Study Group, 1994), and defined forgiveness in terms of inherent equality, that is, individuals have inherent worth as members of humanity. They placed forgiveness outside and above the realm of justice and mercy, as a supererogatory act. However, in their empirical studies they treated forgiveness as an attitude, identifying cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. In other words, on a theoretical plane one may have a high definition but for empirical purposes forgiveness must be defined operationally.

For many writers the starting point in trying to define forgiveness is defining "what it is not". Thus Augsburger (1981) made the observation that, "The definition of forgiveness can be sharpened by showing what it is not." (p. 54). This approach leads writers to compare genuine forgiveness with pseudoforgiveness. The definition of both terms varies according to the particular predilection of the writer. A further complication is the relationship between these two concepts. They are not perceived as bipolar; in other



words pseudoforgiveness is not the opposite of forgiveness. Indeed, their relationship is not clearly identified except in purely negative terms i.e., forgiveness is not pseudoforgiveness.

Pseudoforgiveness was included as an excluding mechanism in Subkoviak et al.'s (1995) EFI scale. The term has been defined as: as an outward expression of forgiveness but with negative affects remaining, through denial, repression, and self-delusion, (Augsburger, 1981); an over-readiness to forgive indicative of low self-esteem (Murphy, 1982); a demand for revenge or an attitude of self-righteousness on the part of the forgiver (Cunningham, 1985); short circuiting the process and making a too hasty reconciliation (Human Development Study Group, 1991). Hunter (1978) observed that most pseudoforgivers have a certain smug quality and he labelled this smugness an immature forgiveness. The term may also contain an element of role-related forgiveness (Trainer, 1984), forgiving out of a sense of duty (Pattison, 1965). Gartner (1992) adopted an object relations approach to forgiveness and claimed that Hunter was the only author who had appreciated "unforgiveness" which he (Hunter) identified with splitting. However, pseudoforgiveness is not presented as a polar opposite to forgiveness, this place is reserved for "fear of retaliation and paranoid anxiety" (Hunter, 1978, p. 167). Finally, Oates (1957) identified a person she called an unforgiving legalist, who cannot accept their own, or others' shortcomings.

Veenstra (1992) distinguished between overlooking, excusing, and condoning which he does not regard as part of forgiveness. He regarded forgiveness as pardoning, which ends the offence as long as the offender promised to change and make "sufficient restitution to heal the victim's wounds..." (p. 165). In addition, forgiveness is releasing and restoring by "creating reborn love" (p. 165). Veenstra defined forgiveness within a process of reconciliation, and in this way moved away from defining forgiveness in purely intrapsychic terms, as a resolution of resentment to a dynamic interaction in which both parties have a role. Forgiveness is brought out of its otherness to be an observable act, with measurable affective, cognitive, and behavioural changes. He claimed that abusive parents used forgiveness in a way, which suggested pardoning and releasing but that their actions were closer to overlooking, excusing, and condoning. On the other hand, dysfunctional parents explained their negative acts by providing excuses but asked their children to forgive them in a way, which suggested overlooking. Thus a false reconciliation



was achieved through denial or other minimising defence mechanisms. Veenstra suggested that the client should be seen in both the role of forgiver, and forgiven.

The literature usually concentrated on the forgiver and forgiven as subject and object, however as Veenstra (1992) observed dyads hold both roles in tension. It is possible that without experience of forgiveness in their early relationships, individuals may be unable to act in either role (Hunter, 1978). Forgiveness is foreign to them as an interpersonal strategy and they may use excusing, overlooking, or condoning as more acceptable alternatives. While Veenstra rejected these as forgiveness, he does so without empirical evidence. The responses of clients undergoing therapy does not necessarily provide a sound basis either for including or excluding these variables as part of forgiveness.

### Summary

An adequate definition of forgiveness, which reflects a common-sense understanding, should include both intra- and interpersonal aspects of the construct. It should be objective in that it is not based on the particular stance of the researcher. In other words, a cognitive representation of the construct should be general enough to include universally common elements as well as being sensitive to individual or social differences.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGION TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONSTRUCT OF FORGIVENESS

*Forgiveness is a concept deeply embedded in our Judeo-Christian culture,  
so fundamental that it is little noticed in the background of our awareness.*

(Donald Hope, 1987, p. 240)

In the introduction to their paper Mauger et al. (1992) recounted an incident recalling Mowrer's presentation of his theory of sin and its relationship to psychotherapy (Mowrer, 1961) to a group of Christian counsellors. At the end of his talk he was asked how the concept of forgiveness fitted into his theory. Mowrer replied, "I guess forgiveness has no part in it." and later confessed that he personally did not understand how a person could forgive someone who had hurt them. The quotation heading this chapter and the above incident illustrate common attitudes to forgiveness. The first assumes that it is "embedded" in western society and presumably is practised without a great deal of thought. The second, that it is an impossibility and therefore not practised at all. The justification for the latter argument is that a hurt cannot be forgotten, because there is no way to undo either the transgression, or its consequences. In other words, how can a person who has been damaged, sometimes severely, willingly forgo any retribution and seemingly let the offender off their deserved punishment. Yet this seems to be the stance adopted by the Judeo-Christian tradition. The difficulties faced by the secular world when it tries to understand the construct of forgiveness are mirrored in religious literature. In order for a thorough psychological investigation of forgiveness to be undertaken its theological and philosophical background needs to be explored. This chapter deals with the theological



understanding of the construct, which underpins the theoretical thinking of most leading researchers in the field.

### The Judeo-Christian Tradition

Forgiveness in the Judeo-Christian tradition has two dimensions; the first is between God and the individual (vertical), and the second between individuals (horizontal).

Within the context of the ancient world Mackintosh (1927) claimed that the concept of the forgiveness of sins was unique. In Greek religion the goal for a man was not to receive forgiveness from the gods but to become one of them, and rule like them. According to Kierkegaard (1843/1973, p. 247) without a true concept of God from a Judeo-Christian perspective paganism had no real understanding of sin and forgiveness. According to these authors the idea of Divine forgiveness was not a concept familiar to the pagan world. However, even if there were no sense of forgiveness from God, individuals would still have to employ some strategy for dealing with transgressions in close relationships. Presumably some form of interpersonal forgiveness existed for dealing with negative acts between kin, and close friends, in order for these relationships to continue after damage or hurt had occurred.

However, by including a Divine dimension the Judeo-Christian tradition provided a unique link between social or relational forgiveness (forgiveness between individuals) and a rationale for forgiveness based on Divine forgiveness. Gladson (1992) referred to this as the “unconditional ought.” In other words, “God has forgiven me so I ought to forgive others.” The horizontal axis (relational forgiveness) is then intersected by a vertical axis (Divine forgiveness) adding a new dimension to relational forgiveness by enduing it with a divine imperative.

The task of psychology is to tease these two strands apart and identify the importance of interpersonal and religious variables to an understanding of forgiveness and the motivation behind its use or rejection as an interpersonal strategy to deal with transgressions.

An understanding of forgiveness in western society today draws on both the Hebrew and Christian traditions (Flanigan, 1998), therefore a consideration of the contribution of each is pertinent to any investigation of the construct.

## Forgiveness within the Hebrew Tradition

Gladson, (1992, p. 125) claimed that the Old Testament laid the foundation for the Christian doctrine of forgiveness. He provided an informative account of the development of the idea of Divine forgiveness in the Hebrew scriptures. In addition, Enright, Gassin, & Wu (1992b, p. 100) claimed that Jewish scripture and tradition provided the first thorough exposition of divine and interpersonal forgiveness.

Forgiveness, as it developed within the Hebrew nation, evolved in a society, which placed a high value on the community and less on the individual. Interpersonal relations were conducted within a worldview in which political and social affairs were centred on the Divine. Thus the relationship between God and the community was central to the Hebrew religion and the individual was only important because of their identification with the community, its beliefs, and practices. Forgiveness in the Hebrew scriptures focuses strongly on the vertical axis between God and the Israelite nation, individual forgiveness must be understood within the parameters of that setting. Interpersonal forgiveness--the horizontal axis--was an integral part of obedience to the Divine Will with disobedience meriting punishment. The rationale is theological and so is the motivation; forgiveness for the Hebrews was restricted to transgressions carried out by the community and individuals within that community. Provision for forgiveness was perceived in community terms. On the vertical axis forgiveness was based on the covenant between God and the Israelite community, while on the horizontal axis interpersonal forgiveness was reserved for maintaining the community and restricted to fellow Israelites.

An associated area of forgiveness within the theological perspective is guilt. According to Gladson (1992) religion has "a larger, more comprehensive vision of the nature of guilt and forgiveness than psychology" (p. 125). There is an objective authority outside mankind an "Unconditional Ought" (Gladson, 1992) and guilt results from disobedience of the Divine commands which has theological and social implications. Divine forgiveness has two functions which are interdependent; to remove the offence and its associated guilt, and to open the way for reconciliation (Quanbeck, 1962). Forgiveness is the means by which God deals with sin (actions contrary to His commandments) and reconciles with the community and individual. The same response is demanded of the community or individual in dealing with transgressions, this constitutes the content and process of forgiveness. A consideration of the distinction between Divine and social forgiveness is important as it has implications for understanding the construct within western society.



The two functions of Divine forgiveness, removal of sin and reconciliation, are described using metaphorical language throughout the books of the Hebrew scriptures. The term *salah* contains the ideas of “God removing sin from people” (Vine, 1985) so that they are hidden from sight (Landman, 1941). In addition, the Hebrew words *kapar* has the meaning “to cover or atone for wrongdoing” and *nasa*, to “lift up and carry away a sin”. All the terms emphasise the distance God sets between His people and their sins and the implicit negation of any punishment, or debt, due in payment. The imagery conjured up is of “concealing” (Psalm 32:1), “covering” (Nehemiah 4:5), “atoning” (Leviticus 16:30) and “removal” (Isaiah 2:9). Through these actions the transgressor is distanced from his transgression and “cleansed”. The annual rite of the scapegoat (Leviticus 11:32, 13:6, 16:30) in which the sins of the people are symbolically put on the goat, which is then sent away into the wilderness represents the idea of separation from sin. Forgiveness is based on the concept of a Holy God who freely chooses to forgive transgressions which merit death. In the Hebrew scriptures God's actions are always set in the context of the Covenant with His people. The role of repentance is ambiguous, that is whether an act of repentance must precede forgiveness, or if forgiveness is available independent of repentance. There are passages which support the first view (Hosea 6:1-6; Joel 2:12-14) and the second view (Ezekiel 16:59-63) (see Gladson, 1992, p. 128).

In social forgiveness there can be no question of “cleansing” the transgressor of sin, however, the idea of forgiveness acting as a means of reconciliation is present. Although its function is rather different when applied to human interactions. The importance of repentance and the role of confession within the process of forgiveness are quite a thorny problem. Whether both are prerequisites for forgiveness is not clear. Gladson (1992) claimed that within the sacrificial system there was no provision for intentional sin. Over the centuries confession became synonymous with repentance, and was regarded as the means through which an intentional sin could be regarded as an unintentional sin, and therefore forgivable. In other words, intentionality was a key consideration under the sacrificial system. No provision was made for intentional sin, neither was forgiveness an automatic response by God, there were instances when it was withheld (Lamentations 3:42). Thus, while confession and repentance played a key role, their place in the forgiveness process was ambiguous.

Subsequent Hebrew development laid a greater emphasis on internal responses. A sacrifice in itself could not be seen to atone for a sin if the person's internal motivation was at odds with their behaviour. This was especially salient as only the head of the family group was able to offer a sacrifice for himself and his dependent family (Leviticus 1:4). In



response to the inability of individuals to offer an effective sacrifice “the ‘blanket’ annual ceremony known as the Day of Atonement was instituted in the period after the return from Exile.” (Knight, 1959, p. 284). Its purpose was to make restitution for what a man owed as a deliberate debt. Today, Yom Kipper, the Day of Atonement, is a solemn occasion observed by every devout Jew. *Kipper* in Hebrew means, “to cover over” or “wash away”. However, Jews do not have any guarantee of forgiveness. In the words of one Jewish writer, “The only remission we have the right to ask is the remission of guilt.” (Morris Joseph). There is no certainty of escape from punishment.

### Forgiveness Within the Christian Tradition

Arendt (1958) claimed that forgiveness was one of the two most original ideas in western civilisation (cited in Bauer, Duffy, Fountain, Halling, Holzer, Jones, Leifer, & Rowe, 1992). Its uniqueness may be due to its origins, as Bright (1962) observed, “Israel's notion of God was unique in the ancient world, and a phenomenon that defies rational explanation.” (p. 132).

Forgiveness was closely associated in the Jewish mind with the ideas of covenant, sacrifice, atonement and national identity and embedded in a preoccupation with the Law (Mackintosh, 1927). In the New Testament God He becomes the sacrifice for sin and provides the perfect sacrifice, which alone is acceptable. As a consequence the Cross (a symbol of God's death in Christ) inaugurates the New Covenant which is for all mankind (inclusive) as compared to the exclusiveness of the Old Covenant (Jews only). Each person who repents is assured of forgiveness and therefore, in turn, has the duty and responsibility of offering forgiveness on an interpersonal level. The forgiven sinner does not have to suffer the punishment caused by their sin (even intentional sin) and will therefore not be called to account for their behaviour.

The link between Divine forgiveness and social forgiveness has produced a complex and often confused understanding of the meaning of forgiveness. The following section will trace the historical development of the construct of forgiveness and its association with the ideas of repentance, confession, and reconciliation.

### The New Testament.

A brief outline of forgiveness in the Gospels cited above fits with Taylor's (1956) claim that forgiveness in the New Testament is “primarily, if not exclusively, presented as the remission of sins.” (p. v-vi).



Taylor (1956) commented that this is not the link, which traditionally theologians claimed, for many of them forgiveness is relational (Moberly, 1914; Temple, 1925; Franks, 1934; Flew, 1934; Redlich, 1937). Taylor identified the crux of the problem; forgiveness has no single meaning, either theological or secular. Researchers have to adopt both a holistic gestalt view (Kant, 1781/1969; Koffka, 1935; Kohler, 1938/1976) and an elemental approach (Locke, 1690/1979; Hume, 1739/1978) to the construct.

The relationship between forgiveness and sin is complex. According to Taylor (1956) forgiveness in Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse is not equivalent to reconciliation or the restoration of fellowship between persons. Nor is it expressly taught that Christ “died that we might be forgiven” although in an eschatological sense it is one of the consequences. Divine forgiveness is prominent because it is the means of removing obstacles blocking the reconciliation of God and man i.e., sin. Repentance is often seen as a condition of forgiveness. Interestingly, there are few examples of forgiveness outside the Gospels (no reference to forgiveness in Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 Timothy, Titus, 1 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and John). Only rarely is forgiveness included in catalogues of virtue in the New Testament (Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 3:9) (Rubio, 1986, p. 82).

The New Testament uses *aphiemi*, *charizomai*, and *apolio* for forgiveness. *Agape* (love) is also associated with the construct. *Aphiemi* indicates repentance and is used in the Greek Orthodox Church only for repentance directed to God rarely between individuals, unless deep remorse is being expressed. Usually *signomi* (pardon) is used between individuals in everyday social encounters. *Charizomai* and *apolio* have the sense of releasing unconditionally while *agape* involves an additional feature of unconditional love (Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, & Freedman, 1992a, p. 87; Enright, Gassin & Wu, 1992b, p. 100). The forgiveness, which is envisaged by these terms, is first and foremost not between equals; God the righteous Judge foregoes exacting a punishment from the penitent sinner. The “unconditional love” (*agape*) is from God and this endows forgiveness with its gift-like nature. Not only is the punishment removed but God also “wipes out” the sin so that it is not “remembered” i.e., no record is kept. These features of Divine forgiveness are then applied to interpersonal forgiveness. It is little wonder that forgiveness is regarded as very difficult, as the victim appears to waive all rights to restitution and instead offers love and reconciliation to the wrongdoer. The Divine-human and human-human act of forgiveness involves cognition, affect, and behaviour. The decision to forgive is a conscious act of will negative affects are to be replaced with



positive ones and behaviour is the outward evidence of the inward change in cognition and affect.

The legal association of forgiveness may be accounted for by its relationship to the doctrine of justification. Pingleton (1989) noted that in the New Testament the Greek word used is *dikaiosis* "which is used in a forensic or judicial sense and literally means acquitted, just, innocent, or righteous" (p. 28). Forgiveness is the means through which the relationship of the sinner is restored with God, so that Christian theologians have used forgiveness and justification "interchangeably" (Peterson, 1975, p. 767).

Turning to the sayings of Jesus, while in the Hebrew tradition an external repentance is sometimes a pre-condition, in the Gospels an internal response is required. The emphasis shifted from the external to the internal i.e., a change of heart was required, "The presence of the forgiving spirit as a condition of the divine forgiveness is a note distinctive of the teaching of Jesus." (Taylor, 1956, p. 15).

In the parables, forgiveness is identified with the removal of barriers to reconciliation e.g., The Unmerciful Servant, The Rich Man and Lazarus, and The Prodigal Son. The latter parable, according to Taylor (1956), extended and enriched the content of forgiveness without even mentioning the word.

Another perspective is that adopted by Duquoc (1986). He placed forgiveness in the New Testament in a cosmic context. God is the God of history: Jesus' teaching brings forgiveness down from heaven to earth, not in the context of sin (Taylor's approach) but of justice. Duquoc argued that forgiveness is an interpersonal strategy already present in the world, independent of any particular theocracy:

One could go on discussing forever where to start an investigation into a fact that is part both of everyday human experience (people did not wait for the gospel to forgive each other) and of the manifest content of the gospel. (p. 36).

In other words, Duquoc (1986) identified, "traces of testimonies of this transcendent forgiveness in this world" (p. 37). Jesus forgives the paralytic (Mark. 2:1-13) and the woman taken in adultery (John.8:1-12) and His enemies from the Cross and in so doing expresses His opposition to an absolute law under which every person is guilty. Logically the Law demanded that every impure person would have to be eliminated. For example, Jesus' response to the accusers of the woman taken in adultery results in her being saved from death by stoning. It is the realisation of their own sin by her accusers, rather than an act of mercy on their part which saved the woman.



Duquoc (1986) suggested that politics inherently involves violence, as it is the means by which the power of the minority is maintained. It is his view that forgiveness provides a “social hiatus” between the demand for justice and the demand for punishment (violence). This perspective on forgiveness has its roots in liberation theology and is an interpretation of forgiveness coloured by a particular political experience. Jesus is seen as opposing legal justice because it offers no future to those whom it condemns. Forgiveness allows a rewriting of history from the viewpoint of the oppressed or victim and opens up the possibility of a new relationship, one no longer based on the power and supremacy which one group exerts over another and enforced through violence.

Rubio (1986) noted that forgiveness had the imperative of duty in the New Testament and in the Early Church. In other words, the passive acceptance of Divine forgiveness had to be changed into an active duty or task to forgive others. This imperative would not only become the new basis for individual relationships but would transform the political ethos of society. The implications, Rubio claimed, would be that reconciliation and forgiveness would replace the law of the strongest (i.e., violence). Individuals would be able to overcome prejudice, aggressive behaviour, and social frictions through forgiveness. A new social ethos and standard of justice would replace the old order.

Rubio (1986) used the parable of the Two Debtors (Luke 6:27-36 and Matthew 5:44) to illustrate the point. In these accounts two different groups of people are called upon to forgive. In Luke the target group represents Christians who are socially and economically well-off and of moral high standing. They are hated by a minority who are economically, socially, and morally inferior to them. In Matthew, the target group represents defenceless Christians who are suffering persecution and threats. In the former case the persecutors are “brothers in the faith” and forgiveness involves “doing good” without expecting any reward. In the latter case forgiveness requires the acceptance of their opponents. The ethic of “strongest” and “reciprocity” which undergirds secular relations is to be replaced by releasing the weaker from any debt, replacing reciprocal obligations with free grace and forgiveness. Such a philosophy of forgiveness envisages a construct which is not limited to dyadic interpersonal relationships but which has social and moral repercussions at all levels from the micro to the macro level. In other words, forgiveness will have a transforming effect on social and power structures between dyads, groups, and even nations. Thus forgiveness poses a challenge to political thinking. As Rubio stated, “The Christian virtue of forgiveness is one of the most important components of political ethics in primitive Christianity.” (Rubio, 1986, p. 89).



However, Taylor (1956) would caution that this explanation of forgiveness is stretching what is actually found in the New Testament which is, “primarily, if not exclusively, presented as the remission of sins.” (p. v-vi). The wider role for forgiveness, which has been outlined above, is a modern extension of New Testament and Biblical teaching which may follow if forgiveness is taken to its logical conclusions. As Calian (1980) commented “Forgiveness is more than an individual matter, it is also a corporate affair involving the structures of society.” (p. 443).

#### Early Church to the Reformation.

The major theoretical concern of Christian writers and leaders was to resolve the moral and ethical problems raised by forgiveness. First, there was the moral and ethical question of not requiring any punishment for offences. This is a very real dilemma for both Christian and non-Christian forgivers today, “Is forgiveness simply “turning a blind eye” to a transgression?” As Mackintosh (1927) in his classic book *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness* commented:

Mistaken ethical compunction, an anxious feeling that before God pardons a man He must first take from him guarantees for morality, deterred great Christian minds from doing justice to the heights and depths of the New Testament proclamation. (p. 27).

Early Church writers looked more to the Hebrew tradition than the Gospels in that they regarded baptism as washing away sins committed before baptism (a state of ignorance) but did not include post-baptismal sins. The latter presumably being intentional and therefore could not be included, in the same way that the sacrificial system had no mechanism for dealing with intentional sins. Hence, the believer was left to make himself or herself worthy by good works, self-abasement, and self-castigation. Throughout the period from Clement of Rome (first century) until the Reformation and Luther (sixteenth century) there was a tension between sins removed by the grace of God and the need to earn forgiveness through meritorious acts: The juxtaposition between faith and works, grace and legalism. This restrictive and legalistic meaning within theological circles undermined the relational character of forgiveness which makes it of interest to psychology. Rainy (1902) claimed that the Roman sacrament of penance developed in response to sins committed after baptism.



Finally, confession gradually assumed an increasingly important place. Rainy (1902, p. 81) claimed that the Roman sacrament of penance emerged out of the “confusion” surrounding sins committed after baptism. Writers like Tertullian taught that God required “satisfaction” for post-baptismal sins, which were not sins of ignorance. Tertullian, Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory the Great all followed the teaching that by almsgiving, repentance, great love, and martyrdom it was possible for God to be in the debt of a believer, “a good act makes God our debtor and wins merit proportionate to its value”. (Tertullian).

The Greco-Roman dream of becoming divine appeared to be a possibility for the few privileged believers through works of supererogation. Forgiveness had become a phenomenon, which could be earned, and confession assumed a role of major importance. The interpersonal and social aspects of forgiveness gave way to individualistic concerns. If this had remained the situation forgiveness would be of little interest to either theologians or psychologists. It was Martin Luther who insisted that justification or forgiveness is continuous and permanent and is not earned through works.

The Protestant tradition, with the emphasis on forgiveness as free and continuous pardon was in keeping with New Testament thinking. The place of confession was present but not given the importance attached to it by the Roman Catholic Church where it became institutionalised (fourteenth century).

To summarise, it can be seen that from its early Jewish tradition forgiveness was viewed as part of the Covenant relationship between Yahweh and the Israelite nation. The sacrificial system provided a symbolic means of dealing with unintentional transgressions. However, sacrifices were not offered on behalf of an individual but for the family they represented. Confession and repentance were linked to forgiveness but did not guarantee it. It became evident that as no one was “wholly pure or unswervingly loyal” (Knight, 1959, p. 283) animal sacrifices were ineffective in achieving forgiveness. Especially as forgiveness encapsulated the idea of completely blotting out a sin so that no punishment was demanded. If Divine forgiveness was so difficult to obtain what of social forgiveness? For the Israelites forgiveness was a means of restoring the community (Gladson, 1992, p. 134) and individual forgiveness did not have a significant role. It is in the New Testament that the construct forgiveness is expanded and developed to include the individual and their relationship to God and all fellow human beings.

The New Testament is primarily associated with the forgiveness of sins and the consequent duty to forgive others. This is extended in subsequent Christian development to



include relational aspects. Relationships are to be transformed on a micro and macro level, so that even the social and political framework of society is challenged and changed.

### Modern thinking.

Taylor (1956) discussed whether the New Testament use of forgiveness in a limited sense should be adopted instead of the wide meaning now attributed to the construct. He commented, "it is dangerous, although not always avoidable to use a term in one sense in theology and in another in common usage." (p. 25) He maintained that religious terminology was organic and not static so that one should expect changes. The implication seems to be that forgiveness is no longer solely restricted to theology but has universal and anthropological implications. Studzinski (1986) captured this broader perspective when he stated, "Forgiveness as a human quality or attitude belongs to the basic make-up of the human person." (p. 3).

The traditional view is that forgiveness takes place between dyads, however, Floristan and Duquoc (1986) also saw it as providing a workable strategy between groups. In the Middle Ages the Abbey of Cluny introduced a "sponsored" experiment in forgiveness in social relationships; warlords were barred from fighting from Wednesday to Monday "because they were high days and holy days". This was called the peace or truce of God (*trenga Dei*). The Synod of Aquitaine 1040 officially proclaimed the "truce of God" for the first time so that everyone could "live free from enmity and fear under the protection of divine forgiveness and peace." (Peters, 1986). In 1085 the Synod of Mainz proclaimed a truce for the entire Holy Roman Empire. Although not complete forgiveness it did offer a hiatus between the outbreaks of violence between the fractions (Williams, 1932).

Modern examples of a "truce of God" include the Christmas truce in the 1914-18 World War, and the policy of reconciliation adopted by President Mandela in South Africa. It would appear that forgiveness offers a new beginning in relationships and relations, which have malfunctioned. Peters (1986) suggested that forgiveness affirmed a person's being and acknowledged their need for affirmation, which encouraged a person to be himself or herself. It is suggested that the increase in suicide is correlated with the absence of forgiveness. Although this may seem rather simplistic on the surface, ignoring the multitude of social and economic factors involved, it does make sense if a wider view of the ramifications of forgiveness as outlined above is taken into account. That is, the mentality of debtor/creditor, power structures which demand reciprocity, inequality, and legalism.



Another view is that forgiveness can be represented as a spiral, the experience of Divine forgiveness and human forgiveness feeding back into each other (Soares-Prabhu, 1986). This approach is used by Soares-Prabhu to explain the apparently contradictory teaching that man's forgiveness is conditional on his forgiving others, "Inability to accept forgiveness indicates an inability to forgive. In psychological terms, we forgive others, only when we have learned to forgive ourselves." (p. 61).

This learning takes place because the individual has experienced Divine forgiveness and is thereby "empowered" to cultivate a non-judgmental attitude towards self and others. However, the non-judgmental attitude or disposition (Endres, 1960; Vidal, 1985) is seen as active not passive, a means of changing the situation of the person who is forgiven. In psychological terms the forgiver refrains from making the fundamental attribution error and instead consciously processes all relevant information to arrive at a situational attribution. Duquoc (1986) argued that the general perception of society as categorised into friends and enemies forms the basis of a political system, forgiveness undermines this social dichotomy.

Both Soares-Prabhu (1986) and Duquoc (1986) credited the practice of forgiveness with effecting a change in the established social order. In psychological terms the motivation for a search for causality is motivated by the desire to forgive. But even if forgiveness is both given and received does this automatically mean that the damaging action is forgotten? In other words, is forgetting a necessary and sufficient condition of forgiveness?

There is considerable debate as to whether forgiveness involves forgetting (Smedes, 1983; Augsburger, 1989). Elizondo (1986) commented:

Forgiveness is neither understanding nor forgetting, nor ignoring. It is an act of generosity, which deliberately overlooks what has been done in order to move the obstacle to our friendship and love. (p. 78).

Descriptions of forgiveness which on the one hand reject terms like "forgetting" and "ignoring" and yet use such terms as "deliberately overlooks" appear to be equating forgiveness with condoning. It seems to imply that no moral wrong has been committed. In addition, the practice of forgiveness can be spiritualised and placed outside the everyday realm of interpersonal relations and onto some higher plane. The following quotation (Elizondo, 1986) illustrates this point:

It is the very forgiveness of others that I truly interiorise and make my very own God's forgiveness of me! In forgiving others, I ratify and make my very own God's generous offer of universal forgiveness. Now I too can forgive as only a God can forgive! Thus it is in forgiving that I am divinised: to err is human, to forgive divine! (p. 78).

This “high calling” appears to echo the Ancient Greco-Roman desire to “become like one of the gods” and the belief of the Early Church Fathers that only martyrs could really forgive. An external, universal, social, and revolutionary role for forgiveness appears to be a direct corollary of a dynamic shift in the understanding of the content of forgiveness. Interpersonal relations are given precedence and the intrapsychic purpose which was uppermost for the New Testament and the Early Church appears to be considered the motivating force.

As writers acknowledge forgiveness is not the sole property of the Christian faith. The construct is present in other world faiths and a brief review of its significance in other world religions is provided in Appendix A.

### Summary

The meaning and significance of forgiveness seems to be different for each religious culture. This poses a problem for pluralistic societies, such as Britain. If one is to explore the application of forgiveness in interpersonal relations it is important first to establish the components which make up an individual's understanding of the construct, it is then appropriate to proceed to study the implications and process of forgiveness in the area of interpersonal relations.

Another difficulty is to find suitable tools of measurement. Scales at present are more concerned with identifying the process of forgiveness rather than establishing what people understand by the term. Finally, forgiveness is very difficult to replicate in a laboratory situation. It is difficult to design laboratory experiments to investigate forgiveness, usually what has been studied is apology (Weiner, Graham, Peter, & Zmuidinas, 1991).

Today the definitions of forgiveness mirror the confusion of thought that has been identified in the Hebrew Scriptures, New Testament, and Christian theology. Many factors are held together in tension: pardon and mercy against legalism and good works; confession and restitution against grace and freedom; the concern with one's own needs



(creditor or debtor) and the concern with the needs of others; maintaining and being part the status quo (power structure) or challenging oppressive structures. Forgiveness is seen as healing, reducing guilt, restoring relationships, a new beginning, involving religious and legalistic factors. It has both intrapsychic and interpersonal importance and is described as a gift, given at a cost by the forgiver.

Some would claim that forgiveness is a theological concept, which should be left to theologians. For example, Mackintosh (1927) stated, "Apart from the Church, the communion of believing men, forgiveness is devoid of meaning." (p. 271). This can be seen to be inadequate for a number of reasons:

- 1 Individuals who make up the Church are also members of society and must offer forgiveness outwith the Church to non-believers.
- 2 The Church itself as a body must interact and influence the secular world, and is duty-bound to do so.
- 3 Some theologians claim that forgiveness is not limited to the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is in fact a universal phenomenon (Rubio, 1986; Duquoc, 1986).
- 4 The construct is mentioned in other world religions although not with the same complexity as in Christianity.

It would appear that forgiveness is a phenomenon common to humanity as a means of dealing with damaging behaviour between individuals. Some aspects may be universal; others influenced by the religious or cultural norms of a society.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF PHILOSOPHY TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONSTRUCT OF FORGIVENESS

*To err is human; to forgive, divine.*

(Alexander Pope, *An essay on criticism*, line 525)

*To err is human; to forgive, supine.*

(S. J. Perelman, as cited in Murphy & Hampton, 1990, p. 14)

The construct of forgiveness poses certain challenges for a philosophical perspective. A consideration of the principal areas of debate is discussed under seven sections: 1). Forgiveness as a moral dilemma; 2). The role of retribution and punishment; 3). Forgiveness as a duty; 4). The role of excuse giving and regret; 5). Whether understanding the cause of a transgression make forgiveness inevitable; 6). The distinction between condoning and forgiveness; 7). Language. Each area is represented by different viewpoints and there is no generally agreed consensus.



## Forgiveness as a Moral Dilemma Within Virtue Theory

Forgiveness is often defined in terms of its relationship to ethics; specifically the question of whether forgiveness can be termed a virtue. Is one who forgives practising a virtue? Writers adopt different approaches to this question.

Downie (1965) perceived the construct to be uni-dimensional and defined forgiveness as an injury, “If A forgives B, then A must have been injured by B.” ( p. 128); this is the first and necessary condition. He added, in “a context of injury...the forgiving spirit is always in itself to be morally approved of” ( p. 128). In other words, for Downie a readiness to forgive is a virtue and any response which is not a virtue is not properly forgiveness. However, there are many complications. For example, one who forgives “easily”, that is without due cognisance of the seriousness of the damage or a guarantee of future good behaviour, would be forgiving out of weakness. In this instance, according to Murphy and Hampton (1990) forgiveness is no longer a virtue:

Forgiveness is not always a virtue, however. Indeed, if I am correct in linking resentment to self-respect, a too ready tendency to forgive may properly be regarded as a vice because it may be a sign that one lacks respect for oneself. (p. 17).

Richards (1988) argued that the efficacy of forgiveness should be viewed in relation to the traits of the forgiver. He claimed that: “...it is wrong to refuse to forgive when that enacts arrogance or some other flaw of character. And it is wrong to extend forgiveness when that does so.” (p. 80).

According to this perspective forgiveness is not a construct which stands apart from the forgiver but is dependent on the character of the forgiver for its moral and ethical credentials. This leads logically into a specificity of response to injurious acts, so that Richards (1988) suggested that forgiveness was not always appropriate:

I believe...it is sometimes wrong to forgive, sometimes wrong not to forgive, and sometimes admirable to forgive but acceptable not to do so. There is a powerful

tradition which denies this, however, teaching that one is never wrong to forgive, and, indeed, always wrong not to do so. (p. 82).

In his argument Richards (1988) is closer to forgiveness as a pro-social facilitator than a theological premise. If the rationale for forgiveness is based on a moral and ethical code then it will be prescriptive and subject to the cultural and social norms of a given society. In contrast, forgiveness within the Christian tradition appears to be non-prescriptive, and perhaps because of this open to different interpretations. Many philosophers in defining the content of the construct adopt Bishop Butler's (1855) assertion that forgiveness is the forswearing of resentment, that is "the resolute overcoming of the anger and hatred that are naturally directed toward a person who has done one an unjustified and non-excused moral injury." (Murphy & Hampton, 1990, p. 15).

However, this attitude means that the victim must deny themselves the opportunity of expressing their anger, obtaining retribution or punishment for the offence. In this respect, forgiveness may be regarded as a weak response. It is the typical response of low status groups in society who have no hope of redress under the law. Weldon (1975) regarded women as a low status group who were socialised into a passive and accepting role. She rejected forgiveness on the grounds that women were taught to forgive and accept offences when they should have responded by resenting and resisting them (see Murphy & Hampton, 1990, p. 10). Weldon's view of forgiveness is that it produces a double standard in society and within interpersonal relationships and results in the further humiliation of the victim.

### The Role of Retribution and Punishment

In normal circumstances it would seem appropriate that a victim who had experienced a moral wrong should seek retribution and the punishment of the offender. As North (1987) pointed out, the great moral philosophers appreciated the intrinsic worth of retribution. Kant regarded each person's worth as being of intrinsic and equal value on the basis of his or her rationality. Thus, the only way a person could lose value would be to lose their rationality. Adopting this egalitarian view of human worth (as opposed to a hierarchical Hobbesian view) retribution was a correct response to wrongdoing. Therefore punishment, as Hegel argued, was the "right" of a criminal who had freely chosen violence. In fact



punishment could be regarded as an act of respect for the wrongdoer. It is not surprising that Kant and Hegel regarded forgiveness with a jaundiced eye as it appeared, by foregoing punishment and justice, to condone a crime. The logic of Kant's argument was that once committed an act could not be undone and was, therefore, unforgivable.

The dilemma is if forgiveness is rejected and punishment insisted on, "How can reconciliation be effected?" Even if the transgressor is repentant it makes no difference to the response of the victim. O'Shaughnessy (1967) discussed the relationship between forgiveness and punishment and by implication whether it achieved reconciliation (a renewed relationship and cessation of negative feeling). He identified the view inherent in some literature that forgiveness and "pardoning" has the same meaning, and that both are concerned with remitting punishment (p. 337). He called this the "RP thesis"; the remission of punishment is either a necessary condition, or a sufficient condition of forgiveness.

Through literary examples of transgressors seeking forgiveness O'Shaughnessy (1967) looked at punishment through the eyes of the forgiven. He suggested that it is necessary to have a broad perception of punishment. That it is possible, through a "defective forgiveness" to continue to punish the transgressor. In other words, by their attitude the forgiver makes it plain that the transgression will be remembered and will remain a barrier between the two parties. This lead O'Shaughnessy to maintain that:

An enquiry into the concept of forgiveness ought to take the form, not so much of asking what 'forgiveness' means, as asking how we can understand what people mean when they use the expression 'forgiveness' and the other expressions related to it. (p. 344).

Thus, O'Shaughnessy (1967) broadened the construct of forgiveness by including what forgiveness means to the forgiven. Sometimes the forgiven is aware that their "repudiation" (Strawson's terminology, 1962) is not accepted by the forgiver who, by their attitude, makes it clear that they intend to maintain their resentment and thereby continue to punish the offender. In such circumstances reconciliation and a restoration of the relationship is impossible. However, it could be argued, especially if religious tradition is invoked, that to forgive is a duty.

### Forgiveness as a Duty

O'Shaughnessy (1967) is in sympathy with Bishop Butler's (1855) view that forgiveness is a duty in the sense that one feels compassion for the wrongdoer, even if one desires punishment for the action. Similarly, Strawson (1962) argued that if offenders acknowledge that their damaging act should be resented and they repudiated it, they should be forgiven. However, O'Shaughnessy asserted that simply asking for forgiveness is not a necessary condition for giving forgiveness. It is important to take on board what forgiveness *means* to both the forgiver and the forgiven. Thus, he included in his list of related concepts punishment, injury, mercy, repentance, love, and remorse. He maintained that "...we have to pay attention...to the way in which these and other expressions are used by the people concerned." (p. 351). By doing this it will be possible to find out the "...way people concerned are *understanding* their use..." (p. 351).

O'Shaughnessy (1967) sought to tackle the problem of forgiveness and retribution by taking a fresh look at punishment and pseudoforgiveness. In contrast, Murphy (1982) and Murphy and Hampton (1990) focused on the role of emotion in the "forswearing of resentment." However, Murphy does not regard forgiveness as an unqualified virtue, "There is much to be said in favour of forgiveness, but it is also important to stress that there is much to be said against it - that it is not unambiguously a virtue." (p. 503). This is because he adopted Strawson's (1962) idea of resentment as a "regulative principle" (Butler's "indignation", 1855) "implanted in us" as a warning when our moral rights are violated. Unlike O'Shaughnessy (1967) who demanded ecological validity and stressed the role of the forgiven, Murphy takes the forgiver's perspective. He defined forgiveness in the negative; it is not excuse, justification, or mercy. It is not the nature but the justification of forgiveness, which supplies the grounds for foregoing resentment and punishment. His argument is based on the reasons given by Beardsley (1980). For Murphy forgiveness is not a duty but neither is it totally optional. It lies, in a Kantian sense, within a latitude of fulfilment. Thus he favoured the cultivation of a "disposition to forgive" (cf. Downie's "forgiving spirit", 1965) because only forgiveness can accommodate the affective element needed to maintain the moral order. He stated that, "...we do all need and desire forgiveness, would not want to live in a world where the disposition to forgive was not present and regarded as a healing and restoring virtue." (p. 513).



Not only was forgiveness pertinent at the interpersonal level but Murphy (1982) also suggested that it had a role to play in freeing people from slavery to irrational feelings e.g., resentment. Therefore, social and political philosophy should find, “the topic of forgiveness...both socially important and intrinsically interesting” (p. 504) as it effects changes in social practices within society. This would appear on the moral front to mirror the claim of liberation theology that forgiveness has ramifications for the social and political institutions of society. Murphy described punishment as the “hard response” and forgiveness as the “soft response” (p. 514). In this instance it would appear that soft is not a negative description e.g., Nietzsche's (1887) view of Christianity as a response of the powerless, but as morally acceptable and socially beneficial.

North (1987) agreed with Murphy (1982) that forgiveness has value “as a moral response” although it has “largely been ignored by moral philosophers who work outside the confines of a religious context.” (p. 499). She regarded forgiveness as having important relational consequences. Punishment is foregone as opposed to being literally wiped out. For example, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the poverty and suffering which the son experienced could be seen as punishment for his behaviour towards his father. However, such an interpretation appears to negate any need of forgiveness from the father, in effect, the Prodigal had paid his dues.

Augsburger (1989) gave an similar example. A wife whose husband had been unfaithful decided, after years of bitter recrimination, to forgive him. The husband's response was, “You can keep your phoney forgiving...I've paid through the nose for what I did. Who needs forgiveness when he's already paid?” (p. 52). The attitude of the forgiver appears to set the moral rightness or wrongness of the act of forgiveness and forms the context in which the process is morally judged. For example, to “turn a blind eye” is morally reprehensible, but excusing a transgression on grounds of inexperience or ignorance is acceptable.

North (1987) placed the onus for forgiveness on the victim's change of heart towards the transgressor. She rejected repentance as an essential prerequisite for forgiveness to take place but admitted that it did make the process easier for the forgiver. According to North, the forgiver always runs the risk of rejection but to request a guarantee runs the danger of appearing unforgiving. This view is echoed by Enright et al. (1994):

When a person forgives, he or she seeks nothing from the other, in the concrete or the ideal, not even the same kind of behavior (forgiveness). The forgiver, in other words, is not in the equation expecting a return of any kind. (p. 69).

As O'Shaughnessy (1967) commented only genuine forgiveness, as experienced by both parties is capable of healing and restoring a broken relationship. North goes further, the positive emotion which forgiveness creates (by the overcoming of resentment), allows both parties self-respect, mutual respect, and a re-affirmation of self-worth. An insistence on retribution and punishment dooms any re-acceptance or hope of reconciliation. In addition, a refusal to forgive allows the transgressor to have power over the victim, and may damage other relationships. Writers have regularly drawn attention to the logical and moral absurdity of forgiveness. For example, Wahking (1992) states, "We are intuitively aware that forgiving someone who has wronged us seems absurd; it clearly violates fairness and justice." (p. 202). However on the same page he wryly observed, "Without hope of forgiveness we would have to be perfect." (Wahking, 1992, p. 202). The writers quoted thus far have seen forgiveness as the forswearing of resentment. However, Richards (1988) suggests that not everyone who is damaged feels resentment. For example, victims may feel contempt, or sadness. He suggested that Murphy (1982) made the same point when he claimed that, "...forgiveness is not the overcoming of resentment *simpliciter*; it is rather this: to forswear resentment on moral grounds." (p. 508).

Previously, it was stated that whether forgiveness is a vice or a virtue is dependent on the character of the forgiver. Richards (1988) suggested that forgiveness acted as a second-level self-regulatory part of a person's character, in response to a wrong. If the character trait associated with forgiveness is virtuous i.e., generosity of spirit, then the forgiving act is a virtue. On the other hand, if the associated character trait is flawed by cowardice or arrogance, forgiveness is a vice (Richards, 1988, p. 80). This implied that the construct of forgiveness is not objectively established but is dependent for its value on the character of the forgiver. This is a similar argument to James' (1909) assertion that truth is relative, that is, it depends on the goals of the individual. There is no Absolute Truth independent of humanity. The vice/virtue issue is important for philosophers but in neither case does forgiveness have the imperative of a duty. Forgiveness as Richards commented is admirable to do but not wrong to omit. He compared forgiveness to an act of heroism,



which is not demanded of a person but regarded as very admirable. In this sense forgiveness is an act of supererogation, that is, one may be praised for doing it, but not criticized for failing to forgive (Enright et al., 1994; Lewis, 1980; Roberts, 1971). Thus there is a distinction between forgiveness and for example, mercy, because the latter may be an obligation or even a duty, but it does not include a change of heart which is the characteristic feature of true forgiveness (Enright et al., 1994).

Kolnai (1973-4) appeared like Murphy (1982) to take a middle path, asserting that even a genuine change of heart, on the part of the transgressor, while making forgiveness “duty-like, is not a strict obligation like promise-keeping or even certain acts of benevolence.” (p. 101). The change of heart applied equally to the forgiver as to the forgiven. The forgiver is able to view the transgressor with empathy while still acknowledging that the transgression was an immoral act.

### The Role of Excuse Giving and Regret

One reason for forgiveness is that the wrongdoer offers an excuse for their behaviour. Richards (1988) took a tough line on excuses, he suggested that they may mitigate circumstances but do not exonerate a person. While Butler (1855) thought one should always forgive excuses, Richards is more selective, otherwise one would be forgiving from a flawed character, and thus forgiveness would be a vice. Murphy (1982) made the distinction between excuses (reasons to forgive) and paternalistic motives (hoping to change the other). An apology may be a social strategy through which an individual undergoes ritual humiliation. Murphy suggested that philosophers have ignored the role of ritual in moral relations. This is an interesting point and may have a link with the role of guilt as an interpersonal strategy for regulating relationships between high and low status individuals (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994).

Richards (1988) adopted a similarly hard line with regard to repentance. It is generally assumed that if someone indicated repentance for a transgression the victim will forgive him or her. But Richards rejected this assumption for two reasons First, there is no guarantee of future good behaviour (cf. North's, risk, 1987) and the Kantian view that the damaging act still remains, it is not removed by an act of repentance. Second, he claims that compassion is not automatically aroused by repentance because the perpetrator is a wrongdoer and not an object of compassion. Richards advised that it is “absolutely vital

that we have a firm sense of justice to supplement our tender feelings of compassion.” (p. 91). In other words, being “victimized by someone creates a perfectly proper obstacle to compassion towards that person” (p. 91). It would appear that the closer one integrates forgiveness into a moral and ethical system the more legalistic the construct becomes. Concern is focused on justifying foregoing retribution and punishment. Forgiveness is no longer an independent construct but one which must be rationally justified in terms of foregoing resentment and punishment and establishing specific reasons including duty, to forgive a transgressor.

Regret is another emotion associated with a duty to offer forgiveness. Golding (1984-5) recalls an incident recounted by Wiesenthal (1976) when the author was sent to the bedside of a dying SS soldier. Wiesenthal had witnessed the horrors of the concentration camp, and this soldier had been involved in an atrocity in which 300 Jews were burned alive in a house. Those who tried to escape were shot. The soldier asked Wiesenthal to forgive him, “I made up my mind and without a word I left the room” wrote the author. Richards (1988) would have agreed with this action, the man was a wrongdoer and was not, therefore, an object of compassion. In other words, the regret, remorse or repentance he expressed was not seen as meeting the enormity of his crime. Smedslund (1991) echoed this attitude; “It is proper that a wrongdoer shall suffer to an extent appropriate to the suffering of the victim.” (p. 171).

Golding (1984-5) discussed three types of regret, although he acknowledged that there might be other types, even as forgiveness may be multi-faceted. However, he did not pursue this point further. He focused his attention on the forgiven. The first type of regret he called *intellectual regret*, which is the recognition that one has misjudged or miscalculated and that the consequences of one’s actions may be fearful. The second type he called *moral regret*, recognition that one has broken the moral order and is now indebted to the victim. The third type was *other-oriented regret* which involves affect, one feels regret because one has wronged another. Golding claimed it is this regret, which is present when forgiveness is being asked.

Focusing on the forgiver, Golding distinguished between “justified resentment” and “justified indignation”. The latter ceases once a debt is paid, that is, material amends are sufficient. But the former demands moral reparation and this is where other-regret is involved. Other-regret undermines the justifiability of continued negative feelings on the



part of the injured person. Golding explained that “one of the main functions of other-oriented regret in the interpersonal forgiveness situation is the negating of the justifiability of the injured party's resentment.” (p. 133). He stated that if a wrongdoer is regretful (both moral and other-oriented regret), then even in cases of third party forgiveness, indignation and resentment cannot be justified. However, he neither condemns nor supports Weisenthal's response to the dying man. His justification for sitting on the fence is that some actions are unforgivable so that, “the wrongdoer must constantly regret his wrong both as regards its (im)morality and its other directedness; the wrong need not, may not, be forgiven.” (p. 135).

In support of his stance Golding (1984-5) cited the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur. During the festival transgressions against God may be atoned. However, transgressions between neighbours demand that some kind of appeasement be offered.

The view that certain actions remain unforgivable explains why society incarcerates some individuals for life; recent examples are Rudolph Hess who died in Spandau prison and Myra Hyndley. In a similar vein, Golding (1984-5) referred to the reparation negotiations between West Germany and Israel, which resulted in the Luxembourg Agreement ratified in the Bundestag in 1953. Jewish opposition centred on the fear that contacts with Germany would be construed as a “measure of forgiveness”. Germans shared a collective guilt through association with Nazi atrocities. While Jews shared the collective status of victims by association with the Holocaust. One social effect of totally denying forgiveness is that an individual, community, or nation remain identified with their transgression. They are trapped in a negative role and rejected with no hope (Heider, 1958).

On the other hand, the cost of forgiveness may be set too high. Hampton (Murphy & Hampton, 1990) for example defined forgiveness as giving approval of the person, “despite what he has done to her” and this should lead to a renewed relationship. This may be too costly, especially for a physically abused wife or child. As a consequence, Hampton adds a rider that circumstances may mitigate against renewing a potentially damaging relationship. For her “...the greatest good forgiveness can bring is the liberation of the wrongdoer from the effects of the victim's moral hatred.” (p. 86). Again, this seems to put a tremendous burden on the forgiver.

Smedslund (1991) suggested that a transgression is showing lack of respect and not regarding “someone as having all the rights and duties that every person of the given status

ought to have” (p. 165). The forgiveness process is seen as re-establishing the respect due to the injured party, the conditions for the forgiver to cease to feel anger and the forgiven to have their feelings of guilt reduced. According to Smedslund forgiveness depends entirely on whether or not the regret expressed matches the severity of the transgression. The fact that other punishment may be imposed has no relevance for the process. He stated that, “It is proper that the wrongdoer shall compensate the victim to an appropriate extent for his or her suffering.” (p. 171).

Apologies, explanations and atonement may be sufficient and Smedslund suggested that the rules of courtesy and justice usually mean that forgiveness will be offered and accepted. Such behaviour would be socially desirable and would fall within the framework of impression management and politeness theory. When he discussed the conditions of forgiving Smedslund distinguished between regretting or repenting and reproaching or accusing oneself. The difference between the responses lies in the degree of perceived control and responsibility. However, he did not pursue this further, but looked at intrapersonal forgiveness, which he concluded, followed the same rules as interpersonal forgiveness. He made an interesting comment regarding “anti-social” identities. Such groups may not share society’s norms and constructs such as forgiveness have to be understood within a prevailing culture.

The point is that not only the *content* of forgiveness may be defined by reference groups or role models (parents, peers, important others) but attitudes to the use of forgiveness as an interpersonal strategy may be shaped by the culture. Such assertions, while appealing to common sense require to be empirically confirmed.

Finally, Smedslund (1991) suggested psychologic as a means of accessing the shared understanding of forgiveness, which allowed predictions of “what people will say, feel and do.” In this he seems to share some common ground with Neblett (1976) in emphasising the importance of looking at ordinary language. Perhaps he is tapping into the secular morality of the west which values a “respect for persons as ends in themselves” (Downie, 1965). In which case his thesis might not apply in the non-individualistic societies of the East, which is, of course, precisely his point.



## Whether Understanding the Cause of a Transgression Makes Forgiveness Inevitable

Weisenthal's (1976) question, "Ought I to have forgiven him?" is addressed by Beardsley's (1980) review of Blanshard's (1961) philosophical perspective. In particular his argument that to understand everything (rationalism) strips both good and evil of their moral standing, so that both are "engulfed" in a "limitless grey sea" (p. 49). Beardsley suggested that Blanshard's perspective of forgiveness involved no longer seeing an evil act as evil. In other words, "tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner" (p. 248), if one understands the causes of an action it is no longer evil and the moral grounds to justify forgiving the person can be identified. This, of course, comes dangerously close to condoning.

Beardsley (1980) suggested three grounds for forgiveness: (i) justification, (a person was not wrong), (ii) exculpation (the person was not blameworthy), (iii) the person was morally good. The first example does not logically require forgiveness. The second is more problematic in terms of defining avoidability and intention and therefore rejected. The third is accepted by Beardsley as a case for forgiveness. The concept of moral goodness she adopts is that the moral quality of an act is based on its motive (Ross, 1930). Thus, while the argument from rationalism may justify forgiveness when it is based on the positive moral approval of the transgressor, the problem arises when forgiveness is given for an action, which arises out of an intentional immoral or evil action e.g., the Holocaust.

Blanshard (1980) in his reply to Beardsley (1980) disagreed that determinism is inconsistent with forgiveness. He maintained that every event is connected and that understanding the cause of an event makes it intelligible and thus forgivable. There are echoes of Hargrave's (1994) model that the victim needs to understand the cause of damage as a first station in exoneration.

Blanshard (1980) argued that damaging events are, "first resented as a whole and then as a whole condoned." (p. 262). (He rejected an elemental approach to damaging events but appeared to find condoning them acceptable. In fact, forgiveness for Blanshard seemed to involve, or be equated to, condoning.) The rationale appears to be a circular argument. If "wrongs" are inevitable and unavoidable because behaviour is dependent on physical conditions, then they are not wrong and one should condone them (determinist position). However, as an evolutionary naturalist Blanshard found this argument unacceptable, taken to its logical conclusion no one could be held responsible for anything!

Blanshard resolved the problem by introducing the concept of free will and determinism to forgiveness.

From the perspective of free-will individuals have a choice of actions and therefore should be punished for choosing evil (a theological perspective). On the other hand, the determinist will argue that actions are inevitable and unavoidable, e.g., the result of physical conditions. It follows that for the determinist guilt is not present (in the free-will sense) and therefore punishment not only is inappropriate but also would constitute a further evil. Forgiveness from this perspective is justified by acknowledging that the wrongdoer “could have done no other” (p. 263). The free-will proponent will demand punishment because the person chose to do evil, punishment is retributive. On the other hand, the determinist will aim to “arrange the forces” for the individual so that right will be promoted and wrong rejected. Blanshard (1980) does not say what these forces are. But like Beardsley (1980) agreed that an act must be judged by its motive. This brings the argument back to whether an evil motive can be forgiven.

Beardsley (1980) claimed forgiveness is giving up resentment and would therefore say an act springing from an evil motive cannot be forgiven. However, Blanshard’s (1980) position is that every entity can be understood (intelligibilism). The whole gambit of causes for behaviour should be taken into account to understand the cause of a particular transgression. Thus, on the one hand there is a duty to forgive and on the other a need to punish to protect society. Briefly, for Blanshard good and evil remain distinct. Forgiveness does not stop at overcoming resentment, from his perspective it involved understanding that all actions are causally interrelated and therefore all may be forgiven.

His perspective is most usefully applied to relations between nations or communities where the need to take into account a diversity of factors is important in understanding the causes underlying events e.g. Northern Ireland, the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, on a personal basis between dyads determinism undermines the responsibility of the offender for their actions, omits any discussion of “repentance” or changed behaviour in the future, and underestimates the difficulty and cost of forgiveness.

Unlike Golding (1984-5) it would appear that Blanshard (1980) would maintain that no kind of wrongdoing is unforgivable. Based on this philosophical stance Weisenthal’s (1976) refusal to respond to the SS soldier’s plea for forgiveness had no moral justification. In other words, the soldier “could do none other”.



Forgiveness as a duty based on ethical and moral precepts appears to lack the characteristic affective features of theological forgiveness. It is rational with “cold” cognitions and the complexity of the construct is not addressed.

### The Distinction Between Condoning and Forgiveness

Attention has already been drawn to the fact that Blanshard (1980) appeared to equate forgiveness with condoning. The term is sometimes used as a synonym for forgiveness. The Collins Reference English Dictionary (Hanks, 1993) gives the meaning of condone to, “overlook, forgive, treat as not existing” (p. 99). However, other writers explicitly reject this definition and understand the two terms to have distinct meanings (Kolnai, 1973-4). Forgiveness is usually seen as a virtue and of positive moral value, while condonation is unethical and immoral because it “turns a blind eye” or denies that a moral wrong has been committed. If forgiveness is equated with condoning then it is usually rejected as morally suspect and in practice unhelpful or even dangerous for the forgiver.

Hampton (Murphy & Hampton, 1990, p. 39-43) rejected the idea that condonation is forgiveness as does Benson (1992). Neither author regarded the terms as interchangeable. Simply accepting a moral wrong without protesting implies that the action is good (Lewis, 1962, p. 122). A person cannot feel resentment because they are unable to publicly acknowledge that a wrong has been committed. Thus, the forgiveness process cannot even begin. Lewis (1962) stated:

To condone an evil is simply to ignore it, to treat it as if it were good. But forgiveness needs to be accepted as well as offered if it is to be complete; and a (person) who admits no guilt can accept no forgiveness. (p. 122).

Hampton (Murphy & Hampton, 1990) suggested that condonation can only be engaged in through self-deception. Certainly on a practical level it is sometimes easier to condone an immoral action in order to, “keep the peace” than draw attention to it. However, such a “moral compromise” if adopted as the usual response to damaging events would prove extremely harmful to a person’s self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. The question then arises, “In what way is forgiveness different from condonation?” Hampton defined condonation as ignoring a moral wrong by saying that it had not happened.

Forgiveness, on the other hand, acknowledges the moral wrong and that punishment is a moral right, but still foregoes punishment. Hampton rejected definitions of forgiveness such as “overcoming of resentment for moral reasons” or “overcoming of the judgement of another as a wrongdoer for moral reasons” because they are too incomplete to answer the problem. She suggested that forgiveness should be approached as a *process* which involved; (i) psychological preparation i.e., overcoming anger; (ii) a change of heart (Murphy, 1982), (iii) reconciliation (not always possible). However to understand the construct solely in terms of process and ignore content is unsatisfactory. From a psychological perspective knowledge structures affect behaviour, therefore the content of forgiveness has to be addressed.

Neblett (1976) criticised those philosophers who demanded behavioural features for forgiveness. He claimed that forgiveness was not a definable activity, “...it is a mistake to imagine that there is some specific and definable activity, which activity and no other constitutes forgiveness.” (p. 269). He suggested that the language of forgiveness be used in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. In other words it is “performatory” so that the meaning of the words spoken are not “precise” and “clear” because they are linked to the purposes and intentions of the speaker. For example, the words, “I forgive you” need not indicate that all resentment is gone, (the ideal), but may, nevertheless, express genuine forgiveness. It is not necessary to limit forgiveness to the injured party, a spokesperson, a relative (when someone is dead), or an official by virtue of his authority may offer forgiveness. The word forgiveness may include other ideas for the forgiver, such as the foregoing of punishment as an expression of mercy. This lead Neblett to challenge the view that, “to forgive and to condone are always distinct and differing activities...” (p. 272). Basically, no one can really know what a person means when they use words, “Many philosophers mistakenly presume that the meaning of an expression is always precise and clear in the sense that what the speaker intends when he uses an expression is always precise and clear.” (p. 272).

Thus Neblett (1976) maintained that forgiveness covered all acts from little transgressions to real injuries. Whether one is forgiving in the ideal sense or condoning is uncertain. One reason for this may be the fact that the same word is used for a range of wrongdoing, that is, it is the language of moral etiquette. Neblett rejected the ideal forgiveness which is either morally prescribed or labelled a supererogatory act and focuses



on “how it is”. Thus, he suggested that the forgiver might be called upon to show tact. By ignoring an offence a forgiver can demonstrate that they have forgiven the offender “in their heart” and this allows the latter time to overcome barriers (shame, guilt, pride). One could call such an act condoning and the forgiver and forgiven might well interpret it as such, but here the concept has a positive connotation.

Kolnai (1972-73) made much the same point. He regarded condonation as distinct from forgiveness, and saw it as, “undignified, self-soiling, unfair”. It is morally suspect because it connives to find excuses for the immoral act and so fails to separate the act from the actor. Kolnai quoted St. Augustine’s command, “Hate the sin, but love the sinner”. However, despite these criticisms he recognised that without condoning it would be impossible to live with some faults. Downie (1965) also noted that condonation had been confused with forgiveness. If an injury is trivial one is tempted to treat it indulgently. However, it is morally wrong because of reasons previously stated, it ignores a moral wrong and is insincere if resentment is repressed. Downie regarded forgiveness as a virtue, by definition a virtue can never be wrong, therefore she rejected equating condonation with forgiveness because the former is morally suspect. The fact that individuals do use the terms synonymously (Blanshard, 1980) suggests a discrepancy between the ideal and real-life.

Neblett (1976) is refreshing in his emphasis on how language is actually used. In his identification of the limits of identifying an *ideal forgiveness* within a rigid moral framework he commented:

The subject of forgiveness, and other moral subjects, are best approached, not with the attempt to define a concept (a single concept as the meaning of a word), but with the attempt to understand an aspect or area of our behaviour, experience, of our ongoing moral practice. (p. 275).

## Language

Recently there has been a debate in philosophical circles over the dominant role of moral principles to the exclusion of concerns about feelings and attitudes. In other words, should a concern with moral “being” be de-emphasised in favour of more attention being paid to moral “doing.” A consequence of this debate has been “the rebirth of virtue theory” and

according to Haber (1991, p. 2) an interest in forgiveness. Philosophy is concerned with arguments, which support or refute forgiveness as a virtue and one, which is morally correct. The perspective is not primarily concerned with the benefits to either the forgiver or the forgiven (in terms of improved mental and physical health) but how the feelings and attitudes of the forgiver actually affect the genuineness of forgiveness. The construct is conceived of in unilateral terms, from the forgiver to the forgiven. Haber (1991) asserted that, “forgiveness is *unilateral*” (p. 11). Thus, if a person forgives for the wrong reasons, what they offer is a “defective forgiveness” (O’Shaughnessy, 1967). While according to other writers (Murphy, 1982; Horsbrugh, 1974) unless all resentment is overcome forgiveness has not truly taken place (see Haber, 1991, p. 27ff, for a fuller discussion of philosophical models of forgiveness). All these approaches depend on defining the meaning of forgiveness in terms of its necessary and sufficient conditions and according to Haber all such attempts will flounder. Forgiveness, because of its complexity defies definition and therefore he proposed an alternative radical model.

Haber (1991) rejected the traditional philosophical approach to forgiveness as overcoming resentment and argued that the words, “I forgive you” are a performative utterance. The theoretical framework of his linguistic model of forgiveness is based on Austin’s (1955/1975) six conditions devised for locutions to be regarded as a performative utterance, the utterance performs the act of forgiving, it is not just saying the words. Briefly, Haber regards his model as overcoming the need for a definition “straitjacketed” by the requirement for “necessary and sufficient conditions”. Forgiveness is viewed as an intentional act in which the words “I forgive you” are spoken according to “the rules for using the expression” (p. 53).

In his writing Austin (1975) distinguished between the locutionary act (saying the words), the illocutionary act (the act done in saying the word e.g., promising) and the perlocutionary act by which we cause effects (Flew, 1984, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1979, p. 333). Haber (1991) thus suggested that forgiving was like promising, that is the act of forgiving takes place with the utterance, “I forgive you” and the other believes that they are forgiven. The perlocutionary act would, according to Haber, belong to Austin’s class of “behabitives” which involved a person’s “reaction to other people’s behaviour...and expressions of attitudes to someone else’s past conduct or imminent conduct.” (p. 160).



Haber's linguistic model distinguished forgiveness from other related terms but failed to take account of the important contribution of other disciplines. He was correct in claiming that no single definition can capture all the facets of forgiveness, but neither can a single model. To avoid being "model-bound" and seeing other models of forgiveness in competition a more useful approach would be to integrate the various theoretical and empirical contributions, (McCullough & Worthington, 1994).

### Summary

Philosophers would appear to experience as much difficulty in reaching a consensus concerning an understanding of forgiveness as theologians. The latter would view forgiveness as a virtue in respect of its association with a Divine attribute. Certain philosophers (Minas, 1975; Gingell, 1974; Kolnai, 1973-4) reject the divine imperative to forgive as usurping the choice of individuals to give or withhold forgiveness. For Kolnai forgiveness has only a "Christian tinge". Others (Lewis, 1980; Hughes, 1975) reject this extreme position and along with it the view that forgiveness is a weak response.

Definitions of forgiveness include the idea of "giving up resentment", "pardon" and "re-accepting". How this is to be achieved involves the problem of punishment and retribution, whether they should be waived or some kind of atonement demanded. If no demands are made there is always the dilemma of appearing to condone an immoral action. While to require no restitution or guarantee of changed behaviour is unacceptable to many philosophers. It is easier to offer forgiveness if the transgressor indicates a change of heart, offers an adequate apology or makes amends. The costliness of 'free gift' forgiveness is generally unacceptable, except for those philosophers who set forgiveness within a religious context. Then they can claim that forgiveness is on a different moral plane. Most writers acknowledged the positive benefits of forgiveness both on a personal and interpersonal level. From a psychological viewpoint the most useful comments are those which view forgiveness in a broader perspective than simply a theological (Christian) duty.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOTHERAPY TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONSTRUCT OF FORGIVENESS

*To err proves human, to forgive leaves you sane and realistic* (Ellis, 1975)

The understanding of the construct of forgiveness within psychotherapy and counselling reflects the kind of diversity evident in theology and philosophy. This chapter reviews the theoretical contribution of those working in the field of psychotherapy. It begins with an overview of the understanding of forgiveness in psychotherapeutic literature.

#### Forgiveness in Psychotherapeutic Literature

##### Confession

The origin of the link between psychotherapy and forgiveness can be traced back to Jung (Todd, 1985) and the importance he attached to confession as a means of dealing with intrapersonal feelings of guilt which he regarded as undermining a person's mental health.

Confession for Jung (1955) was a means of bringing out into the open the unconscious "secret" which would allow an individual to face up to their "shadow" or the dark side of their personality and so achieve "wholeness and integrity of personality" (as cited in Todd, 1985, pp. 43-44). This has little to do with forgiveness in either religious (Christian) or philosophical terms where it is understood as a moral or ethical transgression against another person (human or Divine) which results in a breakdown of their relationship. Jungian confession is not to a victim but to one who has authority invested in them by their role as therapist or priest, to accept the confession, and confer pardon and forgiveness. In fact confession rather than forgiveness is the key mechanism for healing.

The weakness of the intrapsychic approach is that it uses the term "forgiveness" and applies it to an internal, unconscious, intrapsychic process without clearly defining the relationship between forgiveness and confession, or the meaning attributed to the terms. Todd, (1985) admitted that she, "unsuccessfully attempted to find Jung's definition of



confession" (p. 41). Staude (1981) criticised Jung and the therapeutic approach as placing too much emphasis on the inner-directed life, which is not the approach of today's society. While relationships and "social adjustment" are overshadowed by a preoccupation with archetypes and mythology (see Stevens, 1990, p. 260). Although Todd (1985) claimed that Jung saw forgiveness as a necessary corollary of confession, Shontz and Rosenak (1988) disagreed. They claimed that the traditional classical psychoanalytical approach merely locked people into themselves in an endless spiral of neurotic guilt.

The development of forgiveness therapy has often resulted in attempts to define forgiveness in negative terms e.g., what it is not. In addition, many definitions are unbalanced because they are forced to "fit" the health benefits approach of psychotherapy.

Later therapists and counsellors adapted Jung's approach and explained forgiveness, rather than confession, as a means of achieving intrapersonal health benefits by releasing negative feelings, including guilt. For example, within the cognitive-behavioural model self-forgiveness is used as a means of overcoming the paralysing and dysfunctional effect of guilt. Forgiveness it is claimed allows the person to re-think their cognitive reasoning and ascribe causality in a way which provides positive rather than negative affects (Parsons, 1985).

Jung looked at confession from the *forgiven's* perspective and the benefits from receiving pardon and forgiveness were to be accepted back into society. The health benefits accrued from confession, forgiveness was secondary. The interpersonal aspect of forgiveness, which is to the fore in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and to a lesser extent in philosophical writings is entirely absent. Forgiveness is solely associated with guilt reduction.

Psychotherapy reapplied Jung's perspective to the client in their role of forgiver (and until recently ignored the role of the forgiven). It is the forgiver who receives the health benefits e.g., a release from feelings of guilt and negative affect, by offering forgiveness. The alleviation of guilt is achieved not by confession but by forgiveness, hence the forgiver is encouraged by the therapist to become the person in authority who offers pardon and forgiveness, to others and to themselves. Since Jung, psychotherapy has been challenged to define the construct and process of forgiveness and how its thinking has been influenced by the Jungian tradition.

During the last twenty years the way forgiveness has been understood within psychotherapy has moved on from Jung's original association of confession and forgiveness. Recent theoretical developments have led to a more balanced view of forgiveness, which takes account of both its intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects.

However, the beneficial effects to the forgiver's health remain a key feature in psychotherapy.

## Guilt

Guilt as a concept is discussed extensively in psychotherapy as an intrapsychic phenomenon. The individual measures themselves against an abstract standard which they are unable to attain and thus they require to be punished (Gilligan, 1976). Mosher, (1965) referred to guilt as "self-mediated punishment" (p. 162). However, Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton (1994) pointed out that guilt has largely been ignored by those in personality and social psychology. The authors proposed that guilt should be understood within the context of interpersonal relations and claimed that an intrapsychic approach relied, "on intuition, unsystematic observation, and clinical impressions in formulating their views about guilt." (p. 244). They suggested that the "prototypical cause of guilt would be the infliction of harm, loss, or distress on a relationship partner." (p. 245). A distinction is drawn between guilt and shame; the former involved one particular action while shame involved the whole self (Lewis, 1971; Tangney, 1990, 1991).

Walster, Berscheid, & Walster (1976) identify one explanation of a source of guilt in interpersonal relations in terms of equity theory. When a person receives less from a relationship than they think they deserve they may experience feelings of "resentment, anger, envy and feelings of having been cheated" (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994, p. 247). If, on the other hand, they receive more than they deserve guilt may be associated with the realisation of inequity (Hassebrauck, 1986). In both instances negative emotions are the result of interpersonal interaction. As a result of reviewing empirical research Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton (1994) concluded that feelings of guilt fulfil a relationship-enhancing function. Invoking feelings of guilt in another is a means of restoring equity, especially in relationship partners (p. 249). In other words, guilt plays a positive role in maintaining equity in interpersonal relationships. The interpersonal perspective to guilt suggests that it may play a role in forgiveness complimentary to the one suggested by the health benefits approach.

Two different approaches to guilt have been discussed: Guilt as an intrapersonal phenomenon (psychoanalytic perspective) and as an interpersonal phenomenon (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1976). Although the construct of forgiveness is not explicitly mentioned by Baumeister et al. or Walster et al., as some form of reconciliation between dyads was envisaged the construct would seem to be implied. Certainly there seems to be no rational justification for



excluding forgiveness. However, it has yet to be empirically demonstrated whether individuals do include an element of guilt reduction in their understanding of forgiveness.

### Anger

Another construct which is associated with forgiveness in psychotherapy is anger. It is claimed that forgiveness as a mechanism of giving up anger against a transgressor is one indicator of progress towards mental well being. Davenport (1991) stated, "Forgiving, or the letting go of such anger, is thus a sign of maturity and psychological health." (p. 141). She emphasised the function of anger as a defence mechanism in maintaining the ego, but in fact said very little about forgiveness per se. However, she did warn against capitulation, which is defined as a false forgiveness because the victim leaves himself or herself exposed to further abuse. Davenport described the prerequisites for forgiveness and concluded that; "Forgiveness is experienced in the context of increased vitality and appropriate hope." (p. 141). However, she offered no empirical evidence for this assertion.

Fitzgibbons (1986) was equally enthusiastic about the role of forgiveness in releasing anger in patients. He stated that there are three mechanisms for dealing with anger, "denial, expression, and forgiveness; that is, the surrender of one's desire for revenge." (p. 626). He distinguished between "intellectual forgiveness" and "emotional forgiveness". In 1998 Fitzgibbons revised his model and described three levels forgiveness: Cognitive forgiveness which is a conscious decision to forgive; emotional forgiveness which involves feeling empathy towards the offender; and spiritual forgiveness (when cognitive and emotional forgiveness fail). While the first two are clearly defined 'spiritual forgiveness' is a vaguer term. Fitzgibbons used forgiveness exercises for each type of forgiveness, which encouraged a patient to release unconscious and later conscious feelings of anger.

The claim for the therapeutic value of forgiveness in giving up anger is based mainly on case studies. The definition of forgiveness appeared to be in relation to one emotion, anger, which suggested a very restricted view of the construct. Fitzgibbons (1998) stated, "Without a doubt the primary function of forgiveness is to help an individual gain control over anger and resolve it in an appropriate manner." (p. 72). Perhaps the rider should have been added "*for clients in therapy*". This is an example of the health benefits approach biasing a definition of forgiveness. The wide-ranging health benefits - "Forgiveness frees others from their guilt, expedites the resolution of depressive episodes, and leads to a decrease in anxiety as anger is released." (Fitzgibbons, 1986, p. 630) may not simply be attributed to forgiveness, but to many other variables, none of which are

identified and their contribution to the overall health improvement quantified e.g., attention is focused on the problem and a solution offered, time and help are given to work through difficulties. In addition, the Hawthorne effect has not been controlled.

## Revenge

Closely associated with anger and its natural outcome is the desire for revenge. Forgiveness is seen as the antithesis of revenge. For some writers (Nietzsche, 1887) forgiveness in this context is weakness, an inability to obtain justice. For others forgiveness is an impossible concept. Moss (1986) stated that Freud and Hegel would both concur that, "flesh cannot forgive flesh" (p. 201). For forgiveness to take place there must be an Absolute, a third term "beyond the flesh" (p. 202). For Freud the System Unconscious was the only Absolute in psychoanalysis and replaced all other Absolutes.

Durham (1990) regarded "chronic vindictiveness" (p. 134) as the antithesis of forgiveness and defined forgiveness in terms of process, "*the ongoing process of forgiving*, a process which takes time...and which requires immense effort on the part of the forgiving one." (p. 134). She distinguished the process from "forgiveness in the moral sense" and "discrete *acts* of forgiveness, acts of excusing or of pardoning which in fact may leave the offender with the uneasiness of unresolved guilt." (p. 134) (The latter seems to be referring to condoning, "peremptorily excusing or pardoning" (p. 136) rather than forgiveness.) Using her definition of forgiveness as a process she compared it the healthy mourning which Bowlby (1980) described. In the same way that a mourner has to face up to the pain of letting go the loved one, so the forgiver has to face up to the pain of letting go revenge. Durham also mentioned the response of the forgiven. They may not accept forgiveness given from the moral high ground, she suggested the forgiven may need help in allowing "the psychological slate to be wiped clean" and the relationship repaired (Durham, 1990, p. 136). However, how this whole process is to be effected is vague. Durham speaks of a "leavening agent" and "forgiveness is divine" (p. 135).

Hunter (1978) rejected the association between forgiveness and mourning because "In forgiveness there is no necessary object loss." Also, forgiveness has to do with aggression and not grief (p. 172). The similarity he suggested is that both, "result in an eventful decathexis of the object." In other words, the object is seen differently as a result of a release of aggressive energy and the decision to forgive. However, like Durham (1990) he distinguished between two forms of forgiveness. The first he called "genuine" forgiveness (p. 171), which involved giving up animosity and recognising one's, common humanity through feelings of empathy. The second he called "reaction formation" (p. 171) in which the person suppressed feelings of anger while continually recalling the event and



possibly characterised by a “quality of smug virtue” (p. 171). Both Hunter and Durham are at pains to distinguish between “true” and “false” forgiveness. However, the lack of theoretical or empirical rigour behind such assertions and the reliance on implicit theological sentiments to add weight to the argument, undermines the concept as a serious psychological construct capable of scientific exploration.

The complexity and diversity of approaches to the construct of forgiveness within psychotherapy has produced a variety of models. These models seek to provide a theoretical framework to account for the construct itself and to describe the process of forgiveness; from transgression, to a final “letting go”, and subsequent positive affect (love) for the transgressor. It is important to note that in the literature the construct of forgiveness is not always clearly distinguished from the process of forgiveness, which leads to confusion. A review of the important models of forgiveness, their contribution to an understanding of the construct in terms of the content and process, and their approach to the modes (forgiver and forgiven) will be discussed.

### Models of Forgiveness

#### Object relations theory models of forgiveness

The first group of models can be classified under the objects relations theory (Pattison, 1965; Gartner, 1992; Coate, 1994; Vitz & Mango, 1997) which approach forgiveness from a Christian perspective.

Pattison (1965) based his model on the child-parent relationship using Buber’s (1958) I-It and I-Thou distinction. The former he regarded as a punitive model in which the child actually desires punishment (cf. “vengeful forgiveness”, Enright, Gassin, and Wu, 1992b). The I-It relationship is contrasted to the I-Thou relationship in which violations of parental rules result in feelings of shame and a desire for reconciliation. For Pattison this is “true forgiveness”; the forgiveness is already present, the offender only has to “enter into that state” (p.114). The content or understanding of forgiveness is not addressed, it is implicitly assumed to be unidimensional. The focus is on the forgiving process, which involves acknowledging guilt, confession, remorse, restitution, mutual acceptance, and reconciliation. The forgiveness is one-way, from parent or therapist to contrite offender. Thus the portrayal of the two modes is a stereotypical description of that between God and the sinner.

Gartner (1992) and Coate (1994) emphasise the importance of learning to separate the “good” from the “bad” object (splitting) which is crucial to a “mature” forgiveness. In

addition, in order to be able to forgive oneself and others a person must have experienced divine forgiveness (Coate, 1994; Pingleton, 1997; Vitz & Mango, 1997).

None of the theories tackle the question of *what* a person actually understands when they use the construct. Forgiveness seems to be defined in terms of its process. Empirically the models are unfalsifiable and untestable. Little importance seems to be attached to the developmental experience of the individual e.g., attachment (Bowlby, 1969/1997). In addition, the theoretical base of objects relations theory and splitting has been criticised by Laing (quoted in Mullan, 1995) Laing referred to “two person psychology”, the fact that two people will come to a different understanding than a single person. He gave the example of a joint explanation of a Rorschach test. Applied to forgiveness it is possible that one-way forgiveness, focusing solely on the forgiver is different to a forgiveness, which is embedded in an interpersonal negotiation. Psychotherapy because it has perceived forgiveness within the parameters of a health model is in danger of applying a one-person understanding to both the construct and its process. The result is a distorted picture of a complex construct.

### Game Theory and forgiveness

Attempts have been made (Coleman, 1982) to apply game theory to forgiveness. the two parties are seen as trying to maximise their costs/benefits in the transgression-forgiveness situation.

Game theory may provide insights into forgiveness: insights into the interaction between the victim and the offender; the kind of negotiation involved; and the strategies each may adopt over time in a joint effort to re-establish the relationship. It may be that in order to go through the process of forgiveness a person has to think rationally. However, the normal rules of play do not seem to apply to the forgiveness situation e.g., the forgiver does not maximise their payoff. In real-life situations there are a variety of personal and environmental factors which may influence how a person responds to an offender. An important factor is that decisions in game theory do not have a lasting effect on a person's life while the decision to forgive involves high costs for forgiver in terms of self-esteem, and possible costs for the forgiven in accepting forgiveness. Finally, game theory does not offer any insights into the content of the construct; its application would be solely to the process of forgiving. However, it does include both forgiver and forgiven in its analysis.



### Process Models of Forgiveness

In their recent formulation of the original model Enright and Coyle (1998) identified four phases in the process of forgiveness which they called: the uncovering phase, the decision phase, the work phase, and the deepening phase. Forgiveness is approached as an attitude; thus the process involves cognitive, affective and behavioural factors. However, it is not clear if the content of the construct could also be regarded as attitudinal, the definition adopted by the authors (giving up resentment, replacing negative feelings with agapeic affect) makes it unlikely. Clients are taken through twenty units and encouraged to arrive at a forgiveness decision. Al-Mabuk, Enright, and Cardis (1995) found that clients needed to complete all the units to gain from the intervention programme, those who completed a shortened course were less likely to claim to be willing to forgive. The authors claim that the intervention strategy is successful and has been subjected to various empirical studies (Hebl & Enright, 1993; Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995; Freedman & Enright, 1996; Coyle & Enright, 1997).

Apparently, forgiveness is not only a complex construct, the process of forgiveness is equally complex and this has only recently been acknowledged. Therefore Enright and Coyle (1998) claim that simplistic definitions of forgiveness may result in interventions being inadequate vehicles for learning about forgiveness, and learning to forgive.

A weakness of the units is that they adopt an individualistic (subject-object) approach to the process of forgiveness, it is one-way. However, if forgiveness is relational (the transgression has taken place within a social context) then both victim and offender need to establish their understanding of forgiveness *as it applies to their relationship*. Longitudinal studies are required to establish if educational forgiveness methods (i) do result in the re-establishment of the relationship e.g., stated willingness to forgive is translated into behaviour (ii) if the relationship is maintained (cf. problems identified in DiBlasio's 1998, longitudinal study).

The process of forgiveness is accounted for by other motivational factors. McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1997) proposed a model of forgiveness based on empathy. Their therapeutic procedures are geared to encouraging the client to experience empathy towards the offender. Forgiveness is defined in motivational terms as a decreased motivation for retaliation and estrangement and an increased motivation for "conciliation and goodwill". Worthington (1998) proposed a Pyramid Model of forgiveness, which aims to reduce avoidance and withdrawal from the offender. His five steps (recall the hurt; empathise with the one who hurt you; altruistic gift of forgiveness; commitment to forgive; and hold onto forgiveness) are similar to the identified by Enright and Coyle (1998). Other researchers base their forgiveness therapies on family therapy (Hargrave, 1994; Hargrave

& Sells, 1997) distinguish between *exonerating* and *forgiving*. Essentially, the first stage consists of understanding the reasons for the transgression (abuse) identified as *insight* and *understanding*. The second stage involves repairing the relationship and involves the offender (*opportunity for compensation* and the *overt act of forgiving*). The advantage of these models is that they anchor forgiveness within the relational context, and Hargrave and his colleagues involve both parties. However, each adopts a different definition of forgiveness based on the needs of the clients. If forgiveness components are identified they might provide a common denominator across process models so that the various motivational factors could be integrated.

This thesis is concerned not with identifying the steps involved in forgiving the offender but in investigating people's understanding of the construct. This information will provide an empirically established base on which to begin to integrate various approaches to process. At present most researchers base their understanding of forgiveness on "giving up resentment" which in fact is a theological assertion (Bishop Butler, 1855) and has no empirical standing.

### Cognitive models of forgiveness

In contrast to process models, which emphasise motivational factors, two models adopt a cognitive perspective. One model is based on Piaget's work, the other on Kohlberg proposed model of justice.

Piaget's claimed that forgiveness in children occurred when they proceeded from a concrete, literal understanding of reciprocity e.g., "If I hit you back we are even", to understanding reciprocity as an ideal. According to Piaget reciprocity under equality. However, Enright and The Human Development Study Group (1994) proposed that identity rather than reciprocity underpinned an understanding of equality. In other words, the individual realises that committing a bad action does not change a person, they are the same person. Therefore, offenders have inherent worth because of their shared common humanity and this recognition enables the victim to reject future revenge and offer unconditional forgiveness to the offender (cf. Gartner, 1992).

Enright et al. (1994) suggested that children might also base forgiveness on unconditionality and inherent equality but may apply these concepts inconsistently. The key factor in the identity model, applied to all ages, is awareness that transgressions do not change people (abstract identity).

Power (1994) took issue with Enright et al. (1994). He cited work by Youniss (1980) which claimed that older children applied the idea of ideal reciprocity, which Youniss called, perhaps more accurately, "symmetrical reciprocity", the transgression is an



interruption in co-operation and the child seeks to restore symmetry by resuming “co-operative reciprocity” (Power, 1994, p. 81) through nonretaliation. In other words, forgiveness enables the victim and the transgressor to interact as equals. Thus Power (1994) drew a parallel between Kohlberg's stage 3 and Enright et al.'s (1994) soft stage “expectational forgiveness”.

Power (1994) also rejected Enright et al.'s (1994) claim that forgiveness had to be unconditional, as it would fail to, “promote ideal reciprocity.” (p. 84). The claim for unconditionality is based on the view of forgiveness as a “supererogatory virtue” (Enright et al., 1994) i.e., above justice”, placing forgiveness with a religious (Christian) context. This perspective does not fit into everyday secular experience, or into the vocabulary of social psychology. In social psychological terms interpersonal relations are based on the co-operative principle and reciprocity.

The model raises certain questions. If children have access to the same cognitive processes and use the same information as adults in arriving at a decision to forgive, why should the content of their understanding of forgiveness be any different from adults? At present there are no longitudinal studies concerned with the development of the concepts in children. The debate will continue until such studies have been undertaken.

The other cognitive approach to forgiveness is based on Kohlberg's six stages of justice. Thus Enright, Gassin, & Wu (1992b) proposed six descriptions of a forgiver and their motivation to forgive. Although it was not supposed to be a hierarchical structure model it would appear that empirically individuals are seen as progressing from an “inferior” to an “ideal” forgiveness.

The first stage is a “revengeful forgiveness” (heterogamous morality) which demands recompense for the transgression. The second stage is called a “conditional or restitutorial forgiveness” (individualism) which is given provided some kind of restoration takes place, or a person's sense of guilt is alleviated. The third stage is “expectational forgiveness” (mutual interpersonal) and is offered because of pressure from society (O'Shaughnessy, 1967). The fourth stage is “lawful expectational forgiveness” (social system and conscience) and is motivated by religious beliefs. The fifth stage is called “social harmony” (social contract) and results from an individual's need to maintain social relations. The final or ideal stage is motivated by “love” (a universal ethical principle) and is an intrinsic forgiveness. An individual who reaches the sixth stage has a “correct” understanding and undertakes the process with the “correct” motives. This is the stage therapists seek to bring their clients and is modelled on the Christian teaching of forgiveness as an unconditional gift. Hence it includes the ideas of the rejection of

revenge, the possibility of reconciliation, and the healing qualities of forgiveness for the forgiver.

In effect the first two stages are based on achieving external goals; the third and fourth fulfilling the demands of external groups; only the sixth stage is forgiveness valued intrinsically and internalised i.e., it is Christian-based.

Although a hierarchical structure is not claimed it is difficult not to regard this as a progression and in the empirical studies this seems to be the case, only adults reached stage six, intrinsic or unconditional forgiveness (Enright, Santas, & Al-Mabuk, 1989; Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995). The assumption is that young people understand forgiveness and practice forgiveness at the lower stages and it is not until a person reaches adulthood that they are able to respond at the fifth or sixth stage. Park (1989) commented, “if one has much to forgive, he/she may be higher in forgiveness stage than someone who has little to forgive” (p. 108). Thus individuals are seen as passing through these stages until they reach the “forgiveness as love” stage.

This model raises questions. What is being identified? Is it process, content, or is process and content the same? How does the stage model fit the development model? Finally, is the construct of forgiveness the same or different to morality?

If the stages are applied to the process of forgiveness then the identification of different types of process styles may be a useful distinction. However, there is no empirical basis for claiming that people’s *understanding* of the construct will be completely different in each stage. In fact, if people can regress as well as progress it would mean that their cognitive representation was either very unstable, or very vague. Intuitively it makes sense to identify individual differences in the forgiving process. Knowledge structures are relatively stable it is behaviour, which changes across situations and interaction. In other words, the model is describing different processes of forgiveness. Even Enright et al.’s preferred definition (giving up resentment and replacing negative feelings with agape) would only apply in the final stage.

What factors would influence an individual’s choice of a stage? For example, if an individual has reached the sixth stage would they be cognitively aware of all the other stages but consciously reject them (cf. stereotype information, Augoustinos & Walker, 1995)? What influence would childhood experiences have on choice of stage? Individuals who had experienced insecure or ambivalent attachment might favour stages 1 to 3, while those who had experienced a secure attachment might favour stage 4 to 6. Do theorists devise these stages categories or do they reflect the experiences of people?

From a development perspective the stage model implies that young children’s forgiveness involves a demand for punishment or restitution and it is not until late



adolescence or adulthood that an individual is capable of internalising forgiveness. In other words, the person's cognitive representation of forgiveness is distinctively different pre- and post- adolescence. However, there are no studies of children's understanding of forgiveness (cf. Heller's 1986 study of children's understanding of God) to provide an empirical basis for this proposal. Also, from the discussion above it would appear that rather than demanding something in return children base forgiveness on restoration of co-operation e.g., we are friends again.

The final question is whether forgiveness is part of morality, that it is part of justice and mercy. Enright and The Human Development Study Group (1994) discuss this question in relation to Piaget's theory of ideal reciprocity. They state, "If we insist on uniting forgiveness with ideal reciprocity, we place ourselves outside the moral realm." (p. 71). In other words, forgiveness is independent of morality. The authors reject this idea and claim that forgiveness outside of a justice context "does not make sense" (p. 75). They propose that forgiveness involves two cognitive concepts: ideal reciprocity which enables a person to realise an offence has been committed; inherent equality which motivates a person to forgive.

Another perspective of the morality-forgiveness debate is that of Torrance (1986). He argues from a theological perspective and rejects the separation of temporal and spiritual worlds as separate, and governed by separate rules. This perspective views morality as applicable to the temporal world and forgiveness to the spiritual world. Torrance rejects this view which labels forgiveness a supererogatory gift and regards it as part "...of the structure of true human nature..." (p. 57). The justice system acts as a "safety net" when human ethics fail. Forgiveness humanises human relationships by revealing injustices and providing a means for dealing with them, without recourse to the courts.

However, philosophers claim that forgiveness undermines the moral order by "ignoring" or "condoning" an immoral act which merits punishment. Kohlberg claimed that morality could be categorised as progressing from an "inferior" understanding to an "ideal" internalised moral understanding. However, it is questionable whether the construct of forgiveness could be treated the same way. It comes from a different ideological base than morality. Chiu, Dweck, Tong, and Fu (1997) identify duty-based and rights-based morality. Thus duty is the "fundamental justification for the moral rightness of human action" or "human rights are the fundamental justification for the moral rightness of human action." (p. 923). Both are based on perceptions of individual choices and behaviour in a society. In contrast, the nature of forgiveness referred to above is predicated on religious precepts and modelled on the relationship between God and the individual.

However, it could be argued that there is a duty-based aspect to Christian forgiveness i.e., a duty to forgive others because the person has received God's forgiveness. Taking a different perspective some authors argue that forgiveness cannot be regarded as a duty, it is commendable to do, but not prescriptive. If forgiveness is a supererogatory act, above justice, mercy, and duty it is hardly fair to regard it as a moral principle for everyone. The dilemma is that whereas morality may be rights-based or duty-based, forgiveness, from a psychological perspective seems to fall more appropriately within the parameters of altruism and pro-social behaviour. In other words, forgiveness is concerned with the good of the other person regardless of moral (legal) considerations. Moral or legal questions would have to be dealt with by a secular body. The "safety net" is then not in place to deal with the relationship between the dyads, but between the perpetrator and the demands of the community or society.

### Summary

Psychotherapy focuses on intrapersonal guilt, anger, and the desire for revenge where negative emotions can be addressed by using forgiveness therapy. Forgiveness was closely identified with the Christian religion and the role of the forgiver modelled on God, the Forgiver par excellence. Theorists distinguished between "true" and "false" forgiveness (Hunter, 1978; Durham, 1990) i.e., how a person's forgiveness falls short of the Divine model.

As therapeutic interventions progressed various stages in the process of forgiveness were identified, in much the same way as stages in the bereavement process. Process models follow the same steps although they use different terminology. Models, which are based on a moral or a developmental perspective like process models, fail to make a clear distinction between process and content. Forgiveness is defined in terms of giving up resentment and adopting positive emotions towards an offender. In other words, the definition is really a description of the process of forgiving (post-transgressional stage). From a moral or developmental view forgiveness is seen as progressing from an "inferior" to an "ideal", such assumptions await confirmation by longitudinal studies involving children. There is no basis at present to assume that an individual's understanding of forgiveness is labile. Forgiveness may come from a different ideological base to ideas of justice, mercy, and morality. The latter are society-based while the former are religious-based. However, as forgiveness is stripped of its theological associations and becomes secularised the two may come closer. However, the motivational base of forgiveness is altruistic, concern with the needs of the other, irrespective of the rightness or wrongness of



their actions. In addition, apart from the game theory approach most models emphasise the role of the forgiver and tend to minimise that of the forgiven.

## CHAPTER 6

### AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF FORGIVENESS

*Forgiveness in idea is unconvincing; forgiveness as happening to us in real life changes everything and is its own evidence.* (Mackintosh, 1927, p. 46)

The models of forgiveness discussed in previous chapters can be grouped under three main headings, or “higher order” models. The first is the Christian Model, which is based on the Judeo-Christian tradition. The basic assumption underpinning this model is that Divine forgiveness is the exemplar par excellence, which provides the defining features for an act of forgiveness between individuals. Thus forgiveness is an unconditional gift, any form of punishment or recompense is waived. This view leads Hunter (1978) to describe forgiveness as, “...an act worthy of divinity...” (p. 167).

Within this model forgiveness is seen as restorative (guilt for wrongdoing is removed); it is relational (the relationship between God and man is restored); it is above the moral order (transgressions are blotted out or forgotten); Divine forgiveness puts an obligation (duty) on the forgiven to forgive others unconditionally. Writers in the fields of philosophy and psychotherapy have drawn on particular aspects of this model when they relate forgiveness to their own discipline.



The second “higher order” model of forgiveness is the Philosophical Model, which views forgiveness as a virtue, overcoming resentment (Butler, 1855; Downie, 1965; Ewing, 1970; Murphy, 1982; Moore, 1989) and “unilateral” (Haber, 1991, p. 11). The concern is not with the benefits to either the forgiver or the forgiven but the motive or intention behind the act. The approach to the construct is that it is uni-dimensional and this is most striking in Haber’s (1991) linguistic model of forgiveness as a performative utterance.

The third “higher order” model can be termed the Health Model, which focuses on the health benefits, which accrue to a person when they adopt a forgiveness strategy. Initially, the emphasis in psychotherapy was on intrapersonal benefits e.g., overcoming anger, anxiety, and depression but in recent years relational benefits have been given greater recognition e.g., family therapy which emphasises reconciliation and healing between family members.

### A Prosocial Model of Forgiveness

A fourth “higher order” model, a Prosocial Model can be identified within social psychology. This model views forgiveness primarily in relational terms. When a damaging event has caused the breakdown of a relationship then forgiveness is seen as a *prosocial facilitator*, allowing individuals to re-negotiate their relationships in terms of privileges, rights, and duties so that reconciliation may take place. The resumption of the relationship may be dependent on the degree of social support and the value of the relationship for each individual.

Within this “higher order” model similarities between altruistic behaviour and forgiveness are recognised so that the sociobiological explanation for altruism seems equally applicable to forgiveness. The traditional explanation for helping (altruistic acts) is either that they occur in the context of close kin and assist in the spread of the genetic pool (Hamilton, 1964; Dawkins, 1983; Trivers, 1971). Or, outside kinship circles altruism is based on reciprocity, which involves anticipation of a future reward. Godfray’s (1992) concept of “generous tit-for-tat” where an individual “forgives” a non-cooperative response in the hope of a co-operative response in the future. For example, vampire bats who have been successful will often share food with unrelated vampire bats who have been co-operative in the past (Wilkinson, 1988, 1990). The survival of the community is enhanced by the mechanism of forgiveness, which maintains interpersonal relationships and prevents the escalation of non-co-operative acts into conflict and a situation where the survival of the whole group is placed in jeopardy.

Batson's (1987, 1991) distinction between personal distress and empathy-altruism can usefully be applied to forgiveness. In the initial stages following a damaging event personal distress is paramount and forgiveness is difficult until the pain (physical and/or psychological) diminishes. In terms of the affect-priming model (Bower, 1981; Forgas, 1992) and the affect-as-information model (Schwarz, 1990) negative affect or bad mood might indicate from an evolutionary perspective, danger or threat. Once this danger is past then it may be possible for the victim to begin to perceive the situation in a different way, and to empathise with the perpetrator. Reattribution and a positive mood might be more conducive to offering forgiveness (Batson's empathy-altruism).

Whether forgiveness, like altruism, can ever be viewed without some selfish (egoistic) motivation remains in doubt. The *negative state relief model* (Cialdini & Fultz, 1990) proposes that people help others to eliminate their bad mood or make themselves feel good. While the *empathy-altruism model* (Batson et al., 1989) suggests that unselfish helping may be the result of feeling empathy. Both models may equally apply to forgiveness. When a relationship has broken down the victim of the damaging event may feel guilt and sadness because their refusal to forgive is preventing the restoration of the relationship. The act of forgiveness would then provide negative state relief. In similar vein the consequences of forgiving somebody might produce joy in the forgiver as they see the positive consequences of their act and experience the "good" feelings associated with reconciliation (Lomax, 1996).

Thus far comments have been restricted to the forgiver but a similar scenario could apply to the forgiven. When the perpetrator of a damaging event perceives the consequences of their action they can respond with personal distress which can be reduced by leaving the situation. Or, by offering an apology and asking for forgiveness. In the former they are focusing on their own negative feelings, in the latter they are concerned with reducing the pain for the other person and restoring the relationship.

Within the general framework of prosocial behaviour forgiveness seems to fit into a number of other theoretical perspectives. For example, within social support theory forgiveness accords with the desire of individuals to balance their contribution to a relationship (Argyle, 1994, p. 132). Thus in terms of the *equality norm* requesting forgiveness may be a means of maintaining a threatened relationship. A distinction needs to be made between *exchange* and *communal* relationships. The former refers to relationships between strangers and acquaintances and is more concerned with maximising rewards. While a communal relationship (friends, family, lovers) focuses on the needs and suffering of the other and it is mainly this group that is the source of damaging behaviour, and thus forgiveness. Within the prosocial model account has to be taken of other factors



which will influence the operation of forgiveness as an altruistic act. For example, the role of social models (family, friends, school) especially the influence of the mother. (Children's prosocial behaviour was positively correlated with the use of support practices by the parents, Bar-Tal, Nadler, & Blechman, 1980). Batson (1983) identified the role of religion in disseminating altruistic behaviour within society. Although forgiveness is not mentioned as an altruistic act, it does form part of religious teaching. Finally, individual differences will affect the willingness to adopt a forgiveness strategy. Bierhoff, Klein, and Kramp (1990) in their study found that self-esteem enhancement was one of the most mentioned motives for altruistic behaviour in helping road-accident victims.

Thus, self-esteem is another important concept in the pro-social model. What happens to an individual's self-esteem when they are mistreated? How do individuals cope with an offence or transgression? Transgressions by their very nature usually devalue the victim and may result in a lowering of their self-esteem, and a consequent mismatch between the person's own self-image and the one the offender appears to hold. Until this mismatch is resolved and self-esteem restored individuals may find it difficult, or impossible, to operate a forgiveness strategy because the negative affect interferes with rational evaluation and the decision making process (Droll, 1984; Park, 1989). Abelson's (1983) concept of incompatible alternative construals offers a possible explanation. However, Zajonc (1983) claimed that Abelson's (1983) paradigm along with other balance (Heider, 1958) and dissonance theories (Festinger, 1957) operate as closed-energy systems. He suggested that account needs to be taken of the motivational and emotional *antecedents* of cognitions and not simply the motivational and emotional *consequences* of cognitions. In other words, Zajonc argued for an open-system which allowed, "prior motivational and emotional states, external to the system of construals..." to be analysed, "or else no systematic predications can be made." (p. 58).

To summarise, these four higher order models focus on different aspects of the construct of forgiveness. The first model concerns the reconciliation of two parties (God and the individual) to view forgiveness as a mechanism for removing obstacles (i.e., sin) and offering a new beginning. The second focuses on overcoming resentment and distinguishing between "true" and "false" forgiveness. The third concerns the reduction or elimination of negative feelings associated with guilt resulting in reduced anxiety, and subsequent health benefits to the forgiver. Whereas the fourth deals with forgiveness as a form of altruistic or prosocial behaviour, it is a means of restoring and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

What is needed is a theoretical framework derived from an integration of the four models. It would provide the means for constructing a working definition of forgiveness,

which would encourage empirical investigation and develop the construct within the broad area of social psychology. The following is offered as a general working definition which is not based on any single approach and should therefore avoid the problem of being too closely tied to one particular model.

Forgiveness is a conscious decision to set aside one's legitimate claim for retaliation or restitution for a damaging act committed by a significant other, in order for any, or all, of the following to occur:

- 1 The relationship, or a re-negotiated relationship, to be restored.
- 2 The negative affects associated with the damaging act for the forgiver and the forgiven to be reduced, or eliminated.
- 3 The forgiver to cease playing the role of the victim, and the forgiven to be given the opportunity to make amends.
- 4 The forgiver and the forgiven to gain release from the dominating effect of the damaging act.
- 5 The decision to forgive is made without condoning or minimising the effects of the damaging act.

This definition places forgiveness firmly within the context of social psychology.

Finally, some studies suggested that forgiveness was not a homogenous term and that there are different "types" of forgiveness (O'Shaughnessy, 1967; Trainer, 1981; Cunningham, 1985; Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995). Argyle (1994) using factor analysis identified three orthogonal factors, which distinguished the expectations and perceptions of different relationships. Perhaps a person's expectations of a relationship may influence both the way they perceive the other's behaviour and the way they arrive at dispositional attributions about the damage and pain they experience. This may be the explanation for the different types of forgiveness identified by Trainer (1981).

The following theoretical framework takes account of the contribution of all four models. Four levels of response to damaging acts of varying severity are identified. A distinction is drawn between situations which only require an apology and those where forgiveness is appropriate.



## An Integrated Model of Forgiveness

Diagram 6-1 outlines the integrated model for forgiveness. It does not claim to be comprehensive but offers a theoretical framework describing the cognitive, affective and behavioural responses from the identification of a negative event to the possible choice of a forgiveness strategy.

### Distinguishing Events (DE)

Making sense of the world and the experiences of interacting with others is part and parcel of what it means to be human (Jones, 1990). The first task, which in many instances may be spontaneous, is labelling an event. This may be achieved with the minimum of cognitive processing (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Weiner, 1985). An event can be defined as, “an occurrence which takes place at an identifiable time and place, it may happen in isolation or may be a repetition of a similar previous event” (Flew, 1984, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 115). This definition includes “one off” experiences and those which are repeated. The individual has to decide whether the event is negative, positive, neutral, or ambiguous and how to respond (Diagram 6-1, A1). In cognitive miser terms this may take little time (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). However, when events are ambiguous and individuals are uncertain how to interpret the situation, they may seek additional information, either in the environment i.e., asking the advice of others or by asking themselves questions: “How do I feel about this?”, “Am I upset, angry, unhappy, anxious, fearful?” (Schachter & Singer, 1962). Once an event has been categorised the next stage is to determine responsibility. The events, which the perceiver categorises as negative, are the ones, which may call for a forgiveness strategy.

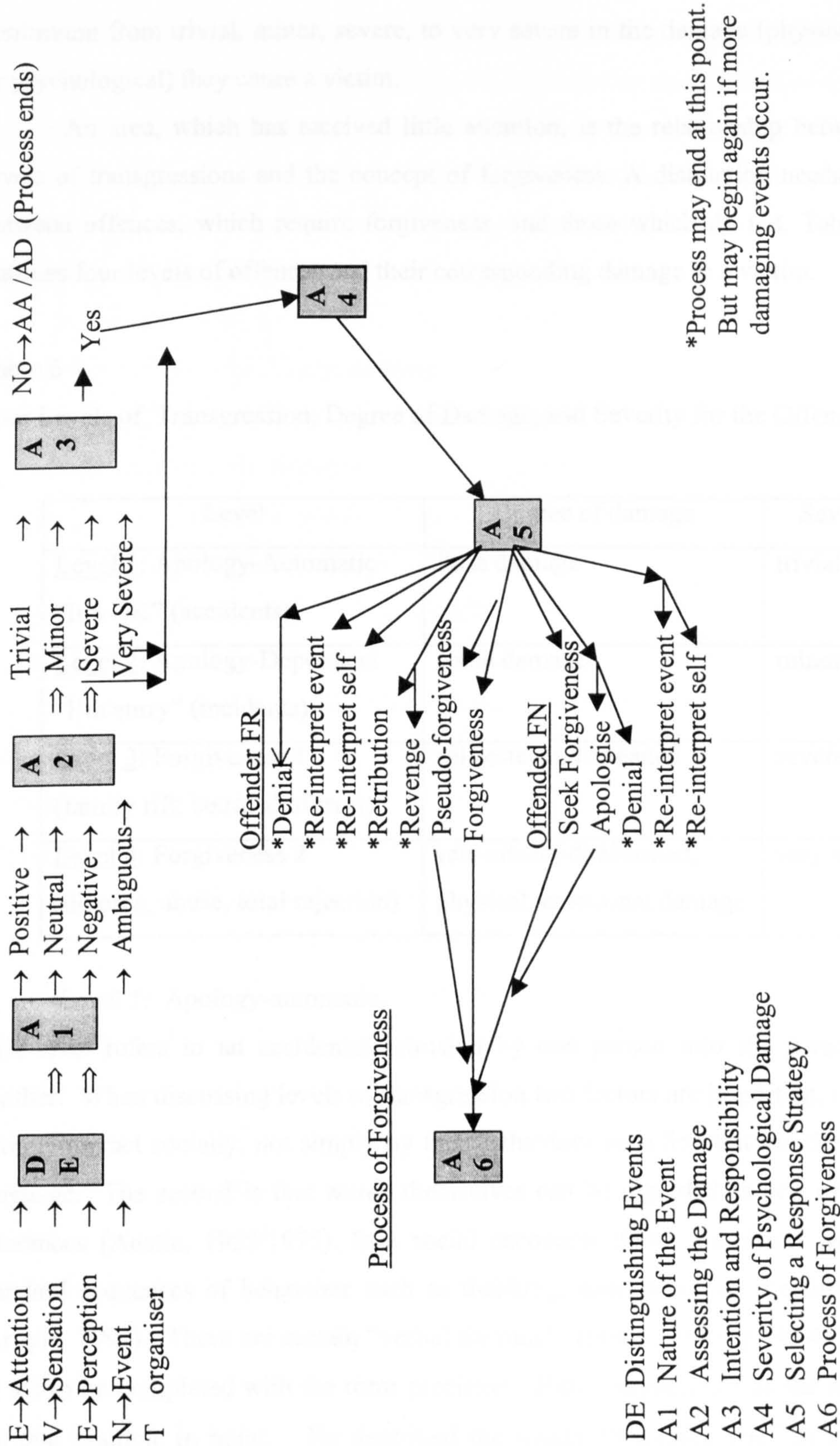


Diagram 6-1. Model of Forgiveness



Assessing the Damage (A2, A3, A4): Levels of Transgression

The following four levels of transgression distinguish between events which range on a continuum from trivial, minor, severe, to very severe in the damage (physical, emotional, or psychological) they cause a victim.

An area, which has received little attention, is the relationship between different levels of transgressions and the concept of forgiveness. A distinction needs to be drawn between offences, which require forgiveness, and those which do not. Table 6-1 below outlines four levels of offences and their corresponding damage to a victim.

Table 6-1.  
Four Levels of Transgression, Degree of Damage, and Severity for the Offended

Level	Degree of damage	Severity
<u>Level 1</u> : Apology-Automatic “It’s OK” (accidents)	little damage	trivial
<u>Level 2</u> : Apology-Dependent “I’m sorry” (incidents)	some damage	minor
<u>Level 3</u> : Forgiveness 1 (family rift, betrayal of trust)	self-esteem demeaned	severe
<u>Level 4</u> : Forgiveness 2 (divorce, abuse, total rejection)	self-esteem diminished, physical, emotional damage	very severe

Level 1: Apology-automatic.

This level refers to an accidental intrusion by one person into the personal space of another. When discussing levels of transgression two factors are important, the first is that people interact socially, not simply by their behaviour or action but via the mediation of language. The second is that words themselves can be regarded as acts or performative utterances (Austin, 1955/1975). In a social encounter there is a shared vocabulary for standard sequences of behaviour such as thanking, apologising or greeting one another (Argyle, 1994). There are certain “verbal formula” (Haber, 1991, p. 40-41) which allow an act to be completed with the most precision. Haber suggested that the marriage vows are one example in point. He described the words, “I forgive you” as a performative utterance. However, the very nature of a performative utterance means that it cannot be separated from the behaviour it represents. The words only have meaning for the participants if they are said within and “under the appropriate circumstances”. Austin

(1955/1975) explained that “I bet” is a performative utterance when accompanied by the action of placing money on a horse before the race is over. In other words, the speaker’s action verifies that they have taken responsibility for uttering a “verbal formula”.

Another aspect of language is the “co-operative principle” identified by Grice (1975). There are certain rules, which govern conversation and are accepted by speakers to ensure that their contribution is relevant, truthful and clear and that there is purpose and direction to the exchange. Goffman (1971) termed these characteristics *social routines* and identified “remedial sequences” whose purpose was to deal with social error when people broke the rules. Argyle (1994) summarised this as:

- A Commits error
- A Apologises, gives excuse or explanation
- B Accepts
- A Thanks
- B Minimises incident

(Argyle, 1994, p. 64).

In an encounter as described above the face-to-face interaction might be an unfocused interaction, that is the participants are in each other's presence, but strangers; or, a focused interaction which could be a conversation, a board game, or a joint task (Goffman, 1972). In either instance the encounter exhibits, “...sanctioned orderliness arising from obligations fulfilled and expectations realised, and that therein lies the structure.” (p. 19). The apology offered by A and accepted by B is an account or explanation which is offered to B to explain A’s error. There are many instances of transgressions for which an apology from the offender to the offended is sufficient acknowledgement and restitution for their behaviour. Apologies are part of accounts, a “linguistic device” used by individuals to explain their behaviour when they are accused of doing something wrong. There are two types of accounts: excuses which admit the wrongfulness of the act but deny full responsibility, and justifications which accept responsibility for the act but deny that it was immoral (see, Lyman & Scott, 1970, p. 113ff). The kind of minor transgressions which would demand an account would be “unmeant gestures”, minor or inadvertent acts or “inopportune intrusions”, faux pas (Goffman, 1959/1990) such as, knocking into people, spilling coffee, misunderstandings or mild disagreements. Lyman and Scott (1970) regard each account as, “...a manifestation of the underlying negotiation of identities” (p. 136). Thus when two people collide in the street their “mutually paired excuses suffice”. These are all descriptions of transitory



accidents and can occur across all kinds of relationships, from strangers to close family. Accidents by their very nature can be dealt with quickly. Level 1 is a low cost transaction because little or no damage is involved. Cultural norms require that such incidents are resolved quickly and with a minimum of fuss. Austin (1955/1975) maintained that the success of the utterance, "I apologise" would be judged by the felicity or happiness of the performative utterance. By this he meant that providing it is spoken with sincerity and follows the accepted social norms, it will be accepted or honoured.

Although the writers cited above, with the exception of Austin (1955/1975), are not specifically referring to forgiveness scenarios, their work does provide a theoretical basis for making a distinction between non-severe transgressions (which can be dealt with by an apology) and severe or very severe transgressions (which require something more than an apology). The writers identify the scripts for dealing with non-severe transgressions and the appropriate behavioural responses necessary to fulfil social norm requirements. However, they do not go on to deal with scripts and behaviour for severe transgressions, which would have made a direct connection with a forgiveness strategy.

The term "apology-automatic" might usefully be applied to minor transgressions because they do not have the features characteristic of the forgiveness in the models already discussed. In other words, there is no serious disruption to the relationship (if one exists) and no significant damage, either external (e.g., physical) or internal (e.g., mental, emotional). The response of the offended person often appears to be automatic or spontaneous, hence apology-automatic. Such responses would fit into Goffman's (1981) "ritual exchanges" the expression of which would be dependent on culture, and the norms governing a particular society. At this level they would be "interpersonal verbal rituals" whose function would be to maintain social roles and possibly physical accessibility so that (i) social interaction can be continued (ii) face concerns honoured and (iii) self-image protected.

### Level 2: Apology-dependent.

The distinction between Level 1 and Level 2 centres around the increased perceived seriousness of the incident and the corresponding increase in significance of account acceptability. The offended will process information concerning the action, intention, and responsibility of the offender. However, the rules of politeness will still operate.

In the second level damage is moderate and rarely has long-term consequences. The type of transgressions may be termed "incident" rather than "accident" implying slightly more time involved in the interaction between the parties. In other words, the interaction is not as perfunctory as in Level 1. It would involve asking if the person is all

right, perhaps repeating the apology with more elaboration and emphasis etc. This level would include disagreements or arguments where one party lost their temper or the coffee spilled was hot and caused physical discomfort. The “ritual exchanges” follow the same pattern as in Level 1. However, whereas in Level 1 the offence was remedied by an apology and, “accepted as sufficient by the potentially offended party before the work was properly terminated” (Goffman, 1981, p. 20), this is not the case in Level 2. At this level a negotiation goes on between the parties to establish intention and the genuineness of the apology along the lines that Grice (1975) suggested in terms of the four categories, quantity, quality, relation, and manner of the co-operative principle.

In most cases, if the event is perceived as an accident by the injured party, and the apology profuse enough, then the apology will be accepted and the matter closed. However, if the victim perceives the act as deliberate, or the apology perfunctory, then escalation will occur and the conflict move up to the next level. The apology needs to be acceptable to the victim to allow the negative emotions to be diffused; thus the term apology-dependent is used. According to Smedslund (1991, p. 168), “A person who apologises and tries to correct the wrong to the extent that this is possible, ought to be forgiven.” Acknowledgement of responsibility, and an apology perceived as genuine are generally regarded as all that is required in situations of this kind (Rowe, Halling, Davies, Leifer, Powers, & van Bronkhort, 1989).

In addition, various factors will influence the acceptability or unacceptability of an apology. If an apology is seen to be offered insincerely or grudgingly (Austin's, 1955/1975, unhappy), or the same transgression is repeated over a period of time, then the incident comes to assume a greater significance. In other words, the apology and perceived intentionality of a particular incident may not necessarily stand in isolation (as in Level 1) but may be viewed within a broader perspective and time-scale. Borrowing Graham's (1977) term, the incident will be “bracketed” with other actions, and the account may not be accepted, either because it is felt that the gravity of the event exceeds the account, or the kind of vocabulary used is not acceptable to the offended. If the event aroused negative affect in the offended this may also influence their willingness to accept an apology. Veenstra (1992) suggested that not every problem will require forgiveness, but only those instances where the relationship has been broken in one of a number of key social support areas, such as communication, understanding, or caring.

It is at this level that questions concerning freedom and responsibility begin to figure. While accidents in Level 1 might be described as “unwitting” or “naive moves” (Goffman, 1969/70) and call for automatic acceptance, in Level 2 the offended will be more concerned with the content of the account. Lyman and Scott (1970) suggested that



an account shared a family resemblance to the verbal component of a motive in Weber's sense of the term, "...a complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself or to the observer as an *adequate ground* for the conduct in question." (p. 112). The account given seeks to, "explain unanticipated or untoward behaviour-whether that behaviour is his own or that of others, and whether the proximate cause for the statement arises from the actor himself or someone else." (p. 112). The authors proposed that excuses for accidents (our incidents) are more likely to be accepted for two reasons. First, they are events which happen infrequently i.e., they are out of the ordinary, and second, the offender does not usually cause accidents. On both counts the offender is excused responsibility. For both kinds of events people need to have some form of explanation for behaviour so that they can arrive at a judgement.

Lyman & Scott (1970) maintained that excuses for incidents are more likely to be accepted because they are not the usual behaviour of the person involved. The willingness of the offended to accept a justification will depend on the particular gravity disclaimer that is the *technique of neutralisation* (Sykes & Matza, 1957) which is used. It is possible that disclaimers based on the expectancy, "everyone knows" (Garfinkel, 1968) such as, "I'm having family problems", may be accepted as reasonable. However, it is likely that justifications in general will not be regarded as appropriate and the offender will be held to be responsible for the event, even if intentionality is not an issue.

In neither level has the question of intentionality been raised, so far both levels have been concerned with incidents which were perceived by the offended as unintentional, that is inadvertent. However, perceived intentionality may depend as much on *who* has been injured as actual intent. Austin (1970) made the following distinction: justifications re-describe the event and show that it was not really blameworthy; excuses accept that the event was blameworthy but reject moral responsibility; and mitigations accept blameworthiness but claim factors which lessen the guilt. He also identified the difference between acceptable and unacceptable accounts. As an example of mitigation Austin used the illustration of treading inadvertently on a snail and on a baby. The same action would be regarded in an entirely different light; treading on a baby would be regarded as more serious and blameworthy. Austin does not take this point further.

However, it may well be that social situations are more complex than an analysis of language would imply (Graham, 1977), so that where transgressions are concerned there is a "halo" effect. By this is meant that in accepting an apology and acknowledging an account the offended signals that the incident is to be forgotten and the relationship (if there was one) resumed unaltered. The first two stages are characterised by:

- 1 The willingness or openness of both parties to effect a speedy resolution of the damage, to maintain role, and protect self-image.
- 2 The absence of any long-term effects.
- 3 The relatively minor nature of the damage caused by the offender.
- 4 The honouring of accounts as long as they follow conventional procedures and are sincere (Austin's term is 'happy').

It is therefore argued that Levels 1 and 2 do not describe incidents, which call for forgiveness but apologies; in the case of trivial accidents apology-automatic, in the case of minor damage (incidents), apology-dependent. Smedslund (1991) defines this kind of wrongdoing against another person as, "...having broken at least one of the rules of courtesy or justice" (p. 167). In other words, they have shown disrespect, to apologise re-asserts the respect and status due to the other. As Davenport (1991) comments, "The ability to 'let go' of anger and frustrations caused by minor annoyances and resentments is clearly related to physiological well-being, as well as to enhanced relationship." (p. 141).

Thus apology-automatic and apology-dependent responses may be viewed as pro-social acts which prevent the development of conflict. When an individual invades another's personal space this is interpreted as potentially threatening, especially in the case of strangers. Thus, it is suggested that one function of account giving is to diffuse the situation and forestall a defensive or aggressive response. The distinction between the two responses is that in apology-automatic the two parties often work together to prevent conflict and follow the rules of social interaction which Argyle (1994) identifies. This would include refraining from making someone feel uncomfortable or trying to reduce tension in the atmosphere. R. D. Laing (see Mullan, 1995) talked about the way disagreement can only be expressed in terms of two people. When two people are in agreement they have a different internal feeling than when they are in disagreement. Laing proposed that disagreement could be understood in terms of dysynergy. Using his terminology, in minor accidents synergy is not undermined but it is in apology-dependent situations. The offended requires an account and may look for additional non-verbal indications of the other's true feelings, Goffman's (1969/70) "leakage" or "covering moves", in order to decide whether or not to accept it.

### Forgiveness.

Basically the distinction between levels 1/2 and 3/4 is that in the latter there is conflict in the relationship and individuals have ceased to cooperate to reduce the tension. In Goffman's terms they have rejected the other's role in the relationship i.e., spouse, friend,



colleague. Or, they have rejected Grice's (1975) co-operative principle and are no longer working together to achieve a common aim. Thus forgiveness, as distinct from an apology or account, is a means of dealing with situations where conflict has already happened and the relationship is already perceived as damaged.

Forgiveness, as part of pro-social behaviour, provides a strategy for restoring relationships which have been damaged. Literature on social interaction, politeness theory, impression management, and accounts all mention untoward events, that is negative actions which call for a response from an offended party. However, even from the restoring relationship perspective, studies rarely mention forgiveness as a response by the offended party. This is probably due to the emphasis on the offender and concern with the type of account used to maintain their relationship role (see, Goffman, 1972, p. 75ff for an explanation of role concepts). Goffman (1972) defined role as the typical response of individuals in a particular situation. "Explanations, apologies, and joking are all ways in which the individual makes a plea for disqualifying some of the expressive features of the situation as sources of definitions of himself." (p. 93). The preoccupation of language researchers and psychotherapists with the offended has led to a distortion in emphasis. What is required is a perspective, which takes both roles into account, and recognises that individuals act in the role of offended, and offender.

Murphy and Hampton (1990) make an important contribution to the discussion of transgressions. They make a valuable distinction between demeaning and diminishing actions (Table 6-1). By demeaning acts they refer to incidents where a person's status is challenged, rejected or ignored so that the individual feels insulted. However, their self-esteem is not undermined because they are able to maintain their own self-worth by refusing to accept the other person's critical evaluation. In contrast, a diminishing event makes the person feel degraded and devalued so that they are no longer "the person they thought they were". This distinction between demeaning and diminishing events is useful in differentiating between the two levels of forgiveness.

### Level 3: Forgiveness 1.

Mention has already been made of one distinction between Levels 1/2 and 3/4 namely that the latter deals with a relationship, which is already in conflict and division, while Levels 1 and 2, are characterised by very low levels of conflict or damage. In Level 3 the damaging event is more severe and psychologically demeaning, that is, the individual has to defend the attack on their self-worth implied by the action of the perpetrator. The damaging act has not caused them to think less of themselves but they are hurt because the perpetrator's action has indicated a lack of respect and esteem which the victim thinks is due.

It is important to remember that it is the perception of damage by the victim, which determines the nature of the event. Lewin (1951) made a distinction between the physical field and the psychological field. The decision concerning degree of severity, intention, and responsibility may be dependent on many factors including individual differences. Whether the action of the perpetrator was morally correct or justified is a matter for subsequent negotiation and is not normally part of the equation the victim initially uses to assess damage.

#### Level 4: Forgiveness 2.

The distinction between Levels 3 and 4 is on grounds of increasing psychological severity. Level 4 involves transgressions, which have damaged a person's self-esteem with the result that they have a changed view of themselves i.e., their self-esteem has been diminished by the event. In some instances, the effect of the transgression may be so severe that an individual requires therapy or counselling in order to enable them to recover from the experience. Individuals need to re-establish their self-esteem in their own eyes, as well as in the eyes of others.

#### Intention (A3).

At Level 1 and 2 incidents will be resolved if they are perceived as unintentional. However, if they are perceived as intentional and not inadvertent or accidental, the offender will be held responsible. The response of the offended will then be dependent on the acceptability of the account offered by the offender i.e. excuses, concessions, justifications, denials (Gonzales et al. 1992). Lyman and Scott's (1970) terminology is applied to different types of relationships, so that a valued and close relationship may prompt forgiveness (Droll, 1984), while consultative (workplace) or formal (business) may not. This is the distinction between communal and exchange relationships.

In Levels 3 and 4 intentionality takes on greater importance and may influence whether the transgression is perceived as demeaning or diminishing. The cognitive decision to give or withhold forgiveness will take account of intentionality as well as such factors as the severity of the outcome, the degree of blameworthiness and the responsibility attached to the offender's behaviour (Gonzales et al., 1992). In terms of "equity theory" the balance between costs and rewards is no longer operating, while in Level 3 this may be rectified through the forgiveness process in Level 4 the degree of damage may require the help of an outside agency. To forgive the offender and consciously forego legitimate retribution would be very costly for the offended. However, as in Level 3 the offended



will still have to decide which strategy to adopt in order to deal with their strong negative feelings and the desire for retribution or revenge.

### Time

The importance of time has already been mentioned in reference to Level 1 (Table 6-1). When events take place within a very short time span they are quickly forgotten. In Level 2 time will only be a factor if the apology is unacceptable in relation to the severity of damage, usually the passage of time itself is sufficient to diminish negative emotions.

However, the effect of time will be far more significant in Levels 3 and 4 (Kiesler, 1971; Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990; Worthington, Kurusu, Collins, Berry, Ripley, & Baier, 2000). The problem individuals face is when, in spite of the passage of time, a transgression remains vivid and continues to arouse strong or debilitating negative emotions. The person finds himself or herself rehearsing the events so that both the transgressor and the transgressed may be locked into the past, unable to “let go” of each other. This was called the transgressional stage (uncovering phase; recall the hurt; insight). Forgiveness appears to be one means of freeing both parties and breaking out of this self-perpetuating cycle.

To summarise, a distinction must be drawn between behaviour, which is trivial or minor, and behaviour which results in damage, or severe damage, only the latter requires forgiveness. Precisely because minor incidents are easy to replicate in a laboratory situation they are often used in so-called forgiveness research. However, such experiments lack ecological validity: The person has not suffered in any real sense and the effect of time, an important variable, is impracticable. Bearing in mind the after-effects of self-esteem experiments on subjects, and their unwillingness to change their attitude even after extensive de-briefing (Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975), there are severe problems in trying to use laboratory experiments in forgiveness research.

### Towards Selecting a Response Strategy (A5)

The victim has determined that the event is negative (damaging) and has assessed its severity in terms of physical, emotional, psychological hurt, and intentionality. They now have to decide what response to make. In terms of stage models this is the post-transgressional stage when feelings of empathy and understanding may begin to change their attributions towards the offender.

When the event is perceived as trivial i.e., spilling coffee, bumping into someone in a crowded street then little information may be processed. In attributional terms the

individual will act as a cognitive miser and respond almost spontaneously (Weiner, 1985). Or, in terms of impression management, it could be described as a click whirr response (Cialdini, 1993). In such situations an apology on both sides would fulfil the social norm requirement and as consistency of behaviour is a strong force in social interaction the event would quickly be dismissed. For minor events the occurrence might be attributed to the dispositional characteristics of the offender i.e., "He or she is just looking for a fight, they're feeling aggressive today." Or, depending on previous knowledge, experience and expectancies the behaviour may simply be dismissed as out of character. An individual's willingness to revise their original attribution to take account of situational factors will depend on the perceived response of the offender. In less serious transgressions the offender is more likely to offer concessions and be concerned with saving the face of the other (Gonzales, Manning, & Haugen, 1992). If the relationship is an important one the victim may value the relationship highly and be willing to offer reconciliation, even in the face of an unsatisfactory account (Droll, 1984). The reciprocation rule may exert social pressure on both parties, reconciliation will be offered by the offended because they will expect the offender to behave in the same generous way when the situation is reversed (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). Viewed in this light reconciliation becomes part of the "web of indebtedness" or "honoured network of obligation" (Cialdini, 1993) which maintains a relationship despite arguments or rows. Minor damaging events would be dealt with relatively quickly, in terms of hours or days rather than weeks, months or years. The event, though remembered will not generate highly charged negative emotions i.e., anger, fear, or guilt. Even if the affective response was high initially the passage of time would diffuse the intensity of emotion aroused by the transgression.

However, if such damaging social exchanges become a feature of the relationship, that is, the normal way individuals deal with each other, as stated earlier, there could come a time when a repetition would no longer be perceived as of minor significance, but of major significance which threatens to dramatically undermine the stability of the relationship.

### Choice of Strategy

At level 3 and 4 an apology is inadequate to deal with the severity of the situation. The victim is damaged or severely damaged and may experience pain, physically, emotionally and psychologically with a corresponding loss of self-esteem. The question the victim has to address is, "How should I respond to the transgression and the offender?" This is the



critical phase when a number of alternative strategies including forgiveness are reviewed. (see Table 6-2).

Table 6-2.  
Strategies Adopted by a Victim in Response to a Damaging Act

Strategy	Response
Denial	“It never happened, I am not affected.”
Reinterpret event	“No harm done.”
Reinterpret self	“I am the kind of person who can expect to be treated in this way.”
Pseudoforgiveness	“It does not really matter.”
Seek revenge	“I will make them pay.”
Seek retribution	“ I will make them suffer.”
Forgiveness	1. Access cognitive representation of construct 2. Decision to begin forgiving process

Each of these strategies has advantages and disadvantages both in their short-term and their long-term effects. Denial or suppression is a Freudian concept and simply results in negative feelings being repressed only to emerge later, possibly in physical manifestations. Re-interpreting the event is another strategy to make the behaviour more acceptable (Close, 1970). A spouse's infidelity is dismissed as a one-off fling. However, as Smedes (1984) has commented such transgressions are usually remembered and recalled in future accounting. Re-interpreting one's self-concept to bring it into line with that of the offender leaves the person with such low self-esteem as to undermine effective future functioning. The first three strategies are characterised by a passive acceptance, which could be interpreted as condonation, like pseudoforgiveness the impression is given that the episode has been dealt with and resolved. However, in reality the offended has only “turned a blind eye”, condoning the transgression, or offering a reconciliation which still keeps account of the damage with no guarantee that the destructive behaviour will not be repeated (Davenport, 1991).

In contrast, some victims actively seek retribution and the punishment of the offender. This is the Law of Talion, “an eye for an eye”, which as Gandhi remarked leaves, “the whole world blind”. Revenge, the desire to inflict equal, or greater damage on the offender, has a dangerous precedent for snowballing into long-term feuds; thus the original transgression may spawn greater hurt and suffering. If forgiveness is offered it would be a revengeful forgiveness which seeks punishment or conditional/restitutional

forgiveness i.e. pseudoforgiveness. As strategies they all offer initial respite for either one, or both parties. However, in the long-term none of them can deal with the real problems of recovering from the hurt, being freed from the effects of the transgression, and being able to look to the future in a happy and optimistic way.

What of the offender? Having committed a transgression they too have to decide how they will respond to their victim (see Table 6-3).

Table 6-3.  
Strategies Adopted by an Offender in Response to Committing a Transgression

Strategy	Response
Denial	"I never did anything wrong."
Reinterpret event	"They were not harmed."
Reinterpret self	"I am not the kind of person who would act in that way."
Apologise	"I am sorry"
Ask for forgiveness	"I am responsible, I will not behave in this way again."

How the offender responds will have a significant effect on the offended. Any of the first three options will increase the likelihood that the offended will respond by adopting one of the negative strategies in Table 6-2, and certainly their willingness to consider forgiveness will be undermined. However, if the apology is sincere and the account offered satisfactory then cultural norms would demand that the offender is forgiven (Smedslund, 1991). If the offender asks for forgiveness, indicates by their changed behaviour that they feel remorse, and will make atonement, under normal circumstances forgiveness would at least be considered. This raises the issue of whether there should be preconditions for forgiveness, or whether in terms of a gift, forgiveness is unconditional. If the victim sets preconditions and the transgressor fails to meet them satisfactorily, they both remain trapped in the past. On the other hand, if the transgressor tries to compensate for the damage they have caused this may influence the victim to forgive.

The Forgiveness Strategy

Is there any justification for preferring a forgiveness strategy to any other? What particular advantages does it have compared with other alternatives? Al-Mabuk (1990) has pointed out that for many people non-forgiveness strategies prove untenable in the long-term. Why? It is possible that they continually return individuals to the past to rehearse events in



order to maintain negative affects. Nor do non-forgiveness strategies resolve the dissonance or alleviate the negative feelings associated with both the transgression, and the transgressor. Problems associated with past events begin to spill over into other close relationships. Fitzgibbons (1986, 1998) suggested that people who are severely damaged and who do not forgive score high on anxiety. The failure to deal with the situation may, as mentioned earlier, undermine the person's mental or physical health (Gassin, 1994, for a review of the empirical literature). Hence, there may come a point when the victim regards the old strategies as unsatisfactory and looks for another option. Motivation to work toward a forgiving process will involve accessing knowledge structures, that is the cognitive representation of the construct. Thus the type of forgiveness might be lawful, motivated by the individual's religious beliefs (that forgiveness is a duty, an unconditional gift); or a desire to maintain social relationships (social harmony), or because of its intrinsic worth to the person. Baumeister, Exline, and Sommer (1998, p. 86) proposed that total forgiveness involved both an interpersonal act and an intrapsychic state. Where an interpersonal act is absent then a person gives silent forgiveness, and without an intrapsychic state there is only hollow forgiveness. This is not contrasting what forgiveness *is not* with what it is *but* identifying sticking points in the process. Forgiveness is a long process, and the first step is to understand what forgiveness means for the individual.

Once the commitment to forgive and the opportunity for compensation offered, the victim has embarked on the process of forgiveness (Diagram 6-1, A6). For some writers this is undertaken by the forgiver almost in isolation from the offender as they work through the appropriate stages. However, Hargrave (1994) described it as a process which involved both the victim and the abuser. In non-clinical situations people experience both situations.

The selection of a forgiveness strategy will depend on a person's understanding of the construct. Thus it is important to establish an individual's cognitive representation of forgiveness as this may have implications for their attitude to forgiveness and forgiving.

In order to explore the construct of forgiveness i.e., the cognitive representation, the empirical studies, which follow, were undertaken. The purpose was to explore the construct of forgiveness, that is, the cognitive representation of forgiveness. The aims were threefold:

- 1 To confirm that forgiveness is a multidimensional construct.
- 2 To distinguish between the content and the process of forgiveness.
- 3 To integrate the contribution of theology, philosophy, and psychology to an understanding of the construct.

Three objectives associated with these aims were:

- 1 To identify the components of forgiveness.
- 2 To make a distinction between a person acting in the role of forgiver and forgiven.
- 3 To identify the variables which influence the components of forgiveness.

The hypothesis associated with the aims and objectives are set out separately in each of the following studies. In all the studies the null hypothesis is adopted.



## CHAPTER 7

### EXPLORATORY STUDY: STUDY 1

*One of the problems with creating an instrument that measures the work of forgiveness is that forgiveness is likely a process which involves a great deal of time and contains elements of both inter- and intrapersonal processing. It is conceivable, for example, that an individual could participate in overt forgiveness without ever achieving any level of understanding.*

(Hargrave & Sells, 1997, p. 51)

To date the published literature concentrates on the process of forgiveness and pays less attention to “level of understanding”. In addition, because forgiveness is a complex construct, content (cognitive understanding) and process (from the decision to forgive, to the possible restoration of the relationship) are often undifferentiated. The purpose of the present investigation was to keep these two parts of forgiveness separate and to concentrate on exploring the individual’s construct of forgiveness that is, what a person means or understands, when they use the word forgiveness.

Process models typically suggest four stages, although the terminology used by researchers may differ, events can be grouped under four main headings: the *transgression stage*; the *post-transgression stage*; the *critical stage* and the *post-decision stage* (see page 92). Each stage emphasises the psychological processes involved in forgiveness. However, some of these processes are not uniquely associated with forgiveness. For example, the stages may be compared to those identified in bereavement (where the critical stage would involve “letting go” of the deceased); or, in the case if the

dissolution of close relationships (where the critical stage would involve a decision to end the relationship).

A further point is that process models tend to assume that the forgiveness act is uncomplicated once the decision has been made. If people have stated that they are willing to forgive then forgiving will involve not only the overt act but also an inner change of attitude towards the offender.

Secondly, from a review of the literature it was apparent that there was some disagreement whether forgiveness was a uni- or a multidimensional construct. It is possible that both the content and the process of forgiveness have an inner complexity, which can be compared to that of love. People experience love in many forms, Lee (1973) and Hendrick and Hendrick (1993). There are a number of different types of love e.g., self-sacrificing love, passionate, romantic and erotic love (see Duck, 1999, p. 59). A person experiences a different type of love depending upon who is the object of their affection. In this way love and forgiveness share a multidimensionality, both the natures of forgiveness and love are related to the type of relationship. Thus people may have a complex representation of the content and the process of forgiveness. In other words, both may be identified as being composed of different components.

Finally, the question as to whether individuals understand forgiveness differently according to the mode in which they are operating i.e., forger or forgiven needs to be addressed.

### Forger and Forgiven Mode

Gassin (1998) noted, "Almost all empirical research to date has focused on the effects of offering forgiveness on the forger." (p. 71). Thus Enright and The Human Development Study Group (1991) writing in the *Handbook of Moral Behavior and Development* stated, "Our focus is on the offended party who will forgive, not on the offender who might ask for forgiveness." (p. 124). Gassin's (1998) study redressed the balance by looking at forgiveness from the forgiven's point of view, she commented that, "The current analysis suggests that seeking and accepting forgiveness may serve as a catalyst for the offender's personal, social and moral development." (p. 84). In other words, according to her exploratory study the experience of being forgiven is the means through which people learn to understand both the construct and how to put it into practice. Thus an understanding of forgiveness, and an ability to forgive, may well be equally dependent on a person acting in



the role of one forgiven as much as being a forgiver. Therefore, the studies in this research adopted a holistic approach and studied the responses of people acting in both roles, forgiver and forgiven.

A further question which was addressed was whether an individual's understanding of forgiveness changed according to the mode (forgiver or forgiven) in which they were operating. Or, if the construct was stable across mode indicating that the same forgiveness schema, perhaps with a different degree of emphasis, was accessed regardless of mode. Boon and Sulsky (1997) suggested that the results of their study "support the view that people's evaluation of a romantic partner's blameworthiness and their decisions to forgive are based on relatively stable, well-established patterns of thought rather than shifting, more capricious ways of thinking about such issues." (p. 39). This stability may well be a feature of people's understanding of forgiveness.

In real life people are called upon to play both roles and it may be that studies artificially separate roles and thus do not provide a complete picture of the way people understand forgiveness. It is possible that in diverse cultures people may operate a different forgiveness schema according to mode. Sugimoto (1997) found that Japanese participants were more likely to include requests for forgiveness in their apology styles than their U.S. counterparts. Different types of transgressions may also affect the way people operate in both modes. However, if the forgiveness construct is robust and stable then the influence of culture and type of transgressions may not be significant across mode. Such findings may be useful in establishing a theoretical framework to account for the development of a forgiveness schema.

In the discussion above forgiveness was compared to love. However, unlike love the forgiving relationship is less symmetrical. Once the decision to forgive has been taken the offender is in a sense indebted to the victim. Indebted because no recompense, restitution, or punishment is required. The unidirectional nature of forgiveness (from forgiver to forgiven) may result in individuals having a different understanding of forgiveness depending whether they are forgiving or being forgiven. However, the literature reveals an over emphasis on the forgiver mode. Two factors may have contributed to this: forgiveness has its theoretical roots in Christian teaching where God forgiving the sinner is the dominant theme; and the pioneering role of clinical psychology in developing forgiveness therapy where forgiving was seen to bring health benefits to the forgiver. This investigation addresses the imbalance by exploring both the forgiver and the forgiven role.

## Dimensionality

While the stages of the process of forgiveness have been identified, the possible components of the content of forgiveness have been ignored. The focus of research has been on process, particularly looking at questions concerned with why people forgive and discovering the factors which contribute, or hinder the decision to forgive. In other words, content and process both need to be investigated.

Dimensionality lies at the heart of an understanding of the construct and provides a means by which content and process can be separated and identified. Sometimes the construct is discussed as if it had different components, for example when researchers discuss the various factors identified in their scales (Wade, 1989; Mauger, Freeman, McBride, Perry, Grove, & McKinney, 1992). Alternatively, components of forgiveness may be seen as highly correlated to the point of being aspects of a coherent whole. However, the possibility exists that forgiveness is a generic term which covers rather separate activities which have only a family resemblance (Rosch, 1978) and can behave in different ways depending on the context. For example, a person with a legalistic view of forgiveness might “acquit” someone’s transgression; they would not require punishment or compensation. However, there might be no restoration of the relationship, or any sense of healing the wounds. This area will be explored in later studies by means of scenarios describing different transgressions and by a cross cultural investigation.

An extensive review of the literature indicated that there were different but significant contributions to an understanding of forgiveness from a number of fields of study. As a consequence, the current research favours a multidimensional, componential view of forgiveness.

## The Components of Forgiveness

The forgiveness literature indicated that there was no agreed definition of the term. However, certain “components” are regularly mentioned. The following components have been identified: Healing (Davenport, 1991; Smedes, 1984; Augsburger, 1989; Fitzgibbons, 1986); Relationships (Smedes, 1984; Augsburger, 1989); Guilt Reduction (Canale, 1990; Smedslund, 1991; Murphy & Hampton, 1990); New Beginning (Smedes, 1984; Augsburger, 1989; Ogilvie, 1984); and Condoning (Downie, 1965; Forward, 1989).



## Relationships

Mention has already been made of the functional role that forgiveness plays in maintaining interpersonal relationships. There is evidence that an ability to both give and receive forgiveness has a positive effect on the maintenance of good social interactions (Brink, 1985; Erikson, 1950; Kaufman, 1984; see Hebl & Enright, 1993). The reason why individuals seek the help of therapists can, in many instances, be traced back to problems in close relationships (DiBlasio & Proctor, 1993). McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1997) stated that people who forgive "...pursue relationship-constructive, rather than relationship-destructive, actions toward an offending relationship partner." (p. 333). They used Rusbult et al.'s (1991) terminology to identify the forgiving act as "a motivational and relational turning point" (p. 333) so that reconciliation replaces vengeful behaviour.

## Healing

A willingness to forgive offenders, it is claimed, has a beneficial effect on the forgiver's health, both emotional and physical (Fitzgibbons, 1986). In analysing healing, different stages or factors in the process of forgiveness have been identified (Enright, Gassin, & Wu, 1992b; Hebl & Enright, 1993; Davenport, 1991; Cunningham, 1985). These stages provide a useful insight into the consequences of negative affects but still await empirical verification (Scobie & Smith-Cook, 1992).

It would appear that when a transgression is committed the person who is hurt might be damaged emotionally, mentally, and in cases of abuse, physically. It is possible that it is not the severity of the damage that is the key factor but *how* the person perceives the damage and *attributes* responsibility and intention to the perpetrator. In other words, the response will be determined by the degree of *hedonic relevance* and *personalism* attributed by the individual to the transgressor (Jones, 1990). In close relationships the loss to the victim is more complex than the loss to the transgressor. The victim has suffered on four counts, (i) the effects of the actual transgression (mental, physical, and emotional), (ii) the loss of self-esteem (iii) the discrepancy between their own self-image and that presented by the transgressor (Cooley, 1902), and (iv) the loss of relationship with its special rights, privileges, and corresponding social support.

## Guilt Reduction

Confession has been seen as one of the main ways of reducing guilt. In psychotherapy the beneficial effects of confessing were noted by Jung (1928) and others (Todd, 1985). Today, psychotherapy or counselling may take the place of the Christian Church's traditional role in confession and forgiveness (Benson, 1992).

Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton (1994) suggested that guilt might be one method by which individuals of low status are able to achieve their goals. However, a study by Gonzales et al. (1992) claimed that guilt might exert a negative influence when the transgressor is more concerned with strategies to save face than maintaining the relationship.

## New Beginning

For a relationship to be re-established there may need to be a new beginning for both parties, so that the victim is able to wish the transgressor well, and cease from rehearsing the experience. It is not simply a case of "picking up where they left off" but of re-establishing trust and relational rules (Hargrave & Sells, 1997, p. 44). Writers such as Smedes (1984) and Enright, Gassin, & Wu (1992b) have identified specific stages through which an individual must pass to attain this new beginning.

Forgiveness also has implications for the forgiven. They need to be able to view themselves as separate from the socially undesirable and damaging act (Heider, 1958) and that forgiveness is available for them (Jordon, 1988). It is therefore important that both the forgiver and the forgiven start afresh, that is, experience a new beginning. The forgiver has given the transgressor the "gift" (Hughes, 1975; Twambley, 1976; Hebl & Enright, 1993) of forgiveness. They are now able to re-establish a relationship with mutual rights, responsibilities and duties. Pollard et al. (1998) combine the role of forgiver and forgiven in their study as they regard the same process occurring in both roles.

## Condoning

From a philosophical perspective condoning is defined as ignoring the moral wrong (Murphy & Hampton, 1990). Condoning seems to imply either tacit support or at least an unwillingness on the part of the victim to condemn the offence as immoral. Blackwelder and Passman (1986) compared 24 grandmothers and 24 mothers who chose rewards and punishments for their children's correct and incorrect responses; the option of ignoring an incorrect response was described as a forgiving act. On the other hand, condoning could



be viewed as part of pseudoforgiveness (a false forgiveness). For example, the warning against capitulation (Davenport, 1991). For Hargrave and Sells (1997) exonerating is the first part of forgiveness and involves *insight* and *understanding*, but does not “remove the victimizer’s responsibility for the destructive action” (p. 44). Thus they distinguish these dimensions from condoning. However, if one is unable to function in this way perhaps condoning and its association with denial strategies, might still be an alternative for some individuals.

### Accessing the Components of Forgiveness

In order to access the components a list of focus phrases was compiled. These were phrases used in forgiveness literature and which were associated with a particular component.

The empirical work for the sake of conciseness has been divided into stages and the studies are presented separately. The initial stage involved exploratory studies to test an original list of 24 focus phrases (12 in the forgiver mode and 12 in the forgiven mode), and four components. The second stage involved a larger sample and a complete list of focus phrases and components; the focus phrases were subjected to factor analysis to establish the number of components, and a measure of internal reliability and validity. The final stage investigated the effects of culture and type of transgression on the response to the focus phrases and the consequent component profiles. The cross-cultural study involved three groups of undergraduates from universities in Glasgow, Greece, and Cyprus and looked at possible cross-cultural differences in understanding and accessing the construct of forgiveness. The final study used scenarios, which described different types of transgressions to determine whether the profiles of the components varied with type of transgression.

During the development of the forgiveness measure a section was added with questions which measured the perceived severity of the transgression from minor to very severe, responsibility, time elapsed since the transgression, and the identity of the person involved. Participants were instructed to bear the recalled transgression in mind when they responded to the focus phrases. On a 5-point Likert-type scale participants rated their agreement or disagreement of the focus phrases to their understanding of forgiveness.

However, the first stage was to establish whether there was a correlation between focus phrases within a component, and between components. Second, if participants distinguished between components i.e., rejected condoning as part of their understanding of

forgiveness. If the meaning of forgiveness is complex, then people will distinguish between focus phrases both within and across components and mode.

### Study 1

The first question to be considered was whether people agreed that their understanding of forgiveness included the following components, Relationships, Guilt Reduction, and New Beginning. In other words, people would agree that certain focus phrases representing the components matched their own understanding of forgiveness. The prediction was that all of the components with the exception of Condoning would be seen as part of forgiveness. Therefore, forgiveness would be comprised of different components. The second question to be resolved was whether the understanding remained the same regardless of mode.

A final question concerned the agreement between the focus phrase of a given component and between the different components. Since this was an exploratory study the relative intercorrelations of focus phrases between and within components on the one hand, and the intercorrelations of components themselves was explored in an illustrative manner. However, these intercorrelations were relevant to the question of the dimensionality of forgiveness. A substantial investigation of this issue will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

### Hypotheses

Null hypothesis (Ho1).

There will be no significant differences between components in the match or no match percentage responses.

Null Hypothesis (Ho2).

There will be no significant differences in the match or no match percentage responses for the focus phrases in the forgiver and forgiven modes.

### Method

A small focus group was set up to look at the way the components could be accessed. It was decided to start with a restricted list of components and to add to them as the research progressed. Twelve focus phrases were identified from the literature to access four



components, Relationships, Guilt Reduction, New Beginning and Condoning. Each participant matched 12 focus phrases in each mode representing 4 components from the perspective of forgiver and forgiven.

Healing was omitted because it could be argued that the healing element was included in the other components, that is Relationships, New Beginning and Guilt Reduction. Its exclusion would be reviewed later. Condoning was included, although the literature rejects it as part of the construct of forgiveness, the assertion has not been empirically tested.

The rationale for choosing a focus phrase was that it had to be present in the literature, semantically associated with its component, and the words or phrases had to be familiar in everyday speech i.e., *a new start* (New Beginning) and *turning a blind eye* (Condoning). A criticism levelled at scales is that they are generally geared to an educated population i.e., university or college students, and not the general population (Elmes, Kantowitz, & Roediger 111, 1992). Although the measure was developed and tested mainly using an undergraduate population, it is proposed that in its final form the scale would be used with a general population.

### Participants

The 39 participants were members of the Junior Honours psychology class aged between 18 and 25 years at the University of Glasgow. There were 82 members (77% were female and 23% were male) in the class. Attendance at lectures drops as the session proceeds to around two thirds or less of the class, 51 students attended the lecture, 7 failed to return the questionnaire and 5 questionnaires were incomplete and therefore not included. Thus 39 questionnaires were completed i.e., 48% of the class or 76% of those attending the lecture. The very low proportion of males participating in the study precluded meaningful gender comparisons.

### Instrument

Participants completed a short questionnaire. Table 7-1 gives details of the components and accessing focus phrases.

Table 7-1.  
Four Components and Their Three Accessing Focus Phrases

Relationships	New Beginning	Condoning	Guilt Reduction
patching up a broken relationship	wiping the slate clean	turning a blind eye	set free from guilt
restoring a broken relationship	a new start	ignoring	pardon
shaking hands	as if it had never happened	overlooking	bury the hatchet

The instructions for the pilot study were: In everyday situations, would you match the following terms to your understanding of forgiveness. A five-point scale was used with “Exact match” (1), “Clear match” (3), and “No match” (5). Order effects were taken into account with half the sample given the forgiver first, and half the forgiven first.

Statistical analysis

Percentages, z scores using Fisher’s z transformation (Guildford, 1965, p. 186) and correlations were used to analyse the responses to the questionnaire. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to those students present before the lecture began. As a consequence there was insufficient time for latecomers to be included in the questionnaire administration. This procedure also contributed to the lower percentage of the class who completed the questionnaire.

The questionnaire took 5-7 minutes to complete. Participants were asked to read the phrases and indicate the extent to which they matched their own understanding of forgiveness in the role of forgiver, and as one forgiven. Once completed the questionnaires were collected in before the lecture commenced.



Results

The three responses 1, 2, and 3 were combined for the “Match” response and 4 and 5 for the “No match” response. Table 7-2 is a summary of the percentages obtained for the forgiver and the forgiven mode.

Table 7-2.  
Percentage of Matching Responses to Focus Phrases in the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

		FORGIVER		FORGIVEN	
Component	Focus Phrase	Match	No Match	Match	No Match
Rel'ships	patch up...	87%	13%	80%	20%
	restore...	79%	21%	82%	18%
	shake hands	46%	54%	54%	46%
New Beg.	wipe the slate...	92%	8%	80%	20%
	a new start	82%	18%	92%	8%
	as if...	79%	21%	69%	31%
Condoning	turning a blind eye	46%	54%	28%	72%
	ignoring	23%	77%	18%	82%
	overlooking	31%	69%	26%	74%
Guilt Red.	set free from guilt	69%	31%	92%	8%
	pardon	87%	13%	87%	13%
	bury the hatchet	95%	5%	95%	5%

A single measure for each component in each mode was obtained by adding the scores for the three focus phrases associated with each component. Histograms of the frequency of responses to the three component focus phrases for the components, four in the forgiver and four in the forgiven mode, can be found in Appendix B, Tables 7-6a-h.

The correlations (see Table 7-3) were computed for pairs of focus phrases within each component, the correlations ranged from .80 to .02. For 39 subjects the critical value of  $r = .32, p < .05$  level, two-tailed test.

Table 7-3.

Pearson Product Moment Correlations Between Pairs of Component Focus Phrases in the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Focus Phrase	Focus Phrase	Correlation (FR)	Correlation (FN)
<u>Rel'ships</u>			
patch up...	restore a broken...	.61*	.67*
patch up...	shake hands	.34*	.21
restore a broken...	shake hands	.25	.37*
<u>New Beg.</u>			
wiping the slate...	a new start	.20	.39*
wiping the slate...	as if it never...	.32*	.41*
a new start	as if it never...	.02	.47*
<u>Condoning</u>			
turning a blind eye	ignoring	.68*	.80*
turning a blind eye	overlooking	.52*	.46*
ignoring	overlooking	.57*	.56*
<u>Guilt Reduction</u>			
set free from guilt	pardon	.40*	.44*
set free from guilt	bury the hatchet	.26	.08
pardon	bury the hatchet	.16	.59*

n = 39 \*p < .05 two-tailed test

In the correlation matrix only 7 focus phrases do not have a significant correlation. In some components all the focus phrases have a high correlation with their component focus phrases. For example, all the three Condoning focus phrases have correlations ranging from .80 to .46. Two Relationships focus phrases have a high correlation (*patching up a broken relationship* and *restoring a broken relationship*, FR .61, FN .67), but a lower correlation with the third focus phrase *shaking hands* (.21 to .37). The correlations between the focus phrases for New Beginning and Guilt Reduction components are generally lower. Three focus phrases showed inconsistent correlations, *as if it had never happened* .02 to .47, *pardon* .16 to .59 and *bury the hatchet* .08 to .59. An analysis of the z scores indicated a significant difference for *set free from guilt* z score 2.56 p < .02, there was a greater



match in the forgiven mode (92%) than the forgiver mode (69%). The correlations between the components vary from .50 and .06 (Table 7-4).

Table 7-4.  
Correlation Matrix for Relationships, New Beginning, Guilt Reduction, and Condoning Components in the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Component	Component	Correlation (FR)	Correlation (FN)
Relationships	Guilt Reduction	.44**	.32*
Relationships	New Beginning	.43**	.50**
New Beginning	Guilt Reduction	.11	.39*
Relationships	Condoning	.25	.32*
Guilt Reduction	Condoning	.20	.06
New Beginning	Condoning	.32*	.19

n = 39 \*\*p<.01, two-tailed test \*p<.05, two-tailed test

The highest correlations were between Relationships and Guilt Reduction (.44 FR; .32 FN) and New Beginning (.43 FR; and .50 FN). The correlation between New Beginning and Guilt Reduction was much lower especially in the forgiver mode (.11 FR; .39 FN). The correlations between Condoning and the other three components were also much lower.

Table 7-5.  
Average Percentage Match Responses for Relationships, New Beginning, Condoning, and Guilt Reduction Components

Component	Match (FR)	Match (FN)
Relationships	83%	81%
New Beginning	84%	80%
Condoning	33%	24%
Guilt Reduction	84%	91%

Note: Simple average scores were obtained by dividing component total percentages by 3. Except in the case of Relationships where *shake hands* was regarded as an outlier and omitted then the average was obtained using a denominator of 2.

The z score for Relationships (83%) and Condoning (33%) in the forgiver mode was 4.47,  $p < .01$ . New Beginning (80%) and Condoning (24%) in the forgiven also had a highly significant z score 4.95,  $p < .01$  (Table 7-5). The z score analysis confirmed that Condoning was distinct from the other three components.

### Discussion

The results indicate that three components Guilt Reduction, Relationships and New Beginning and their focus phrases in both modes received substantial “Match” responses (see Table 7-2; Tables 7-6a-h). However, as predicted by the literature Condoning received a majority of “No match” responses in both modes. It would appear that even using this broad measurement the results indicate that participants differentiated between the components in line with expectations. The z scores also confirmed that Condoning was a distinctive component. Thus the first null hypothesis can be rejected. Participants did distinguish between components so that three received a majority of “Match” responses and one (Condoning) a “No match” response.

The problem with having identical focus phrases in both modes is that the responses may simply be copied from one mode to another. However, a percentage analysis (Table 7-2) shows sufficient variation to be fairly confident that this did not occur. Respondents appear to differentiate between individual focus phrases within a component and between modes.

However, the intercorrelations between focus phrases indicate variations in the within and between component analysis. Although *set free from guilt* receives a 92% “Match” response in the forgiven mode the percentage is substantially lower in the forgiver mode (69%). The z score analysis confirms that this is a significant difference. While there are other focus phrases, which differ in their match responses between modes, none of these are statistically significant.

As females made up the majority of the sample it was not appropriate to analyse gender differences. In addition, the main focus of this study was to identify differences between the two modes rather than sex differences. Gender differences are explored in Study 2.

Ideally it would have been useful to have used distractors; these were not included which is a weakness of the instrument. However, the main purpose of the dissertation was to identify phrases, which could access the various components of forgiveness, rather than



designing a questionnaire to measure forgiveness per se. In addition, the condoning focus phrases could be seen as representing a component, which most participants do not perceive as forgiveness.

It would appear from this initial investigation that respondents are differentiating not only between components but also between focus phrases within components. The intercorrelations between the composite measures of each component indicates a significant correlation between Relationships and Guilt Reduction (.44 FR and .32 FN), Relationships and New Beginning (.43 FR, .50 FN). The correlation between New Beginning and Guilt Reduction was only significant in the forgiven mode (.39 FN). The only significant correlation between Condoning and the other three components was Relationships in the forgiven mode (.32, FN) and New Beginning in the forgiver mode (.32, FR). The results of the correlational analysis give some support to the proposition that forgiveness is a multi-dimensional construct consisting of a number of components.

The z scores for the percentage match responses between components and within mode indicate that participants respond differently to Condoning than the other three components. This suggests that Condoning may not be part of people's construct of forgiveness as either a forgiver or one forgiven, at least for this sample. This is the first empirical indication of an assertion which is prevalent in the forgiveness literature.

The second null Hypothesis may be rejected on the grounds that there is evidence that participants respond differently to focus phrases according to mode of response.

### Conclusion

From the first exploratory study three components emerged as forming a match with participants' understanding of forgiveness; Relationships, New Beginning and Guilt Reduction. While Condoning did not match participants' construct of forgiveness, it was not completely rejected, an average of 33% (FR) and 24% (FN) did report "Match" responses. There is some suggestion from the intercorrelations that the components of forgiveness could operate as separate dimensions but the small sample inhibits firm conclusions.

Participants reported difficulty in using the "Match" response. This scale was originally adopted as a better instruction for comparing the focus phrase with the participant's understanding of forgiveness. However, in view of the problems it created the second study would revert to the traditional Likert-type scale. The next study, Study 2,

compared the responses on the original “Match” scale with the responses on a Likert-type scale to confirm or reject the initial results. Demographic variables were also included to establish the possible effects of gender and religiosity on choice of components.



## CHAPTER 8

### Exploratory Study: Study 2

*Forgiveness, like love, is a topic that tends to elicit respectful piety rather than serious thought from those who consider it. (Murphy, 1982, p. 504)*

The first study established a list of 12 focus phrases to access four components. Three components were regarded by participants as matching their understanding of forgiveness (Relationships, Guilt Reduction, and New Beginning) while the fourth component (Condoning) received a higher percentage of “No match” responses. The second study used a larger sample and a 5-point Likert-type scale to confirm the findings of the exploratory analysis. In addition, the effect of religiosity and gender variables on responses to the focus phrases, and the four components was investigated.

### Religiosity

The relationship between religious belief and attitude to forgiveness has been explored in the literature, mainly in the area of counselling. Studies have looked at the religious belief of professionals and how this affected their willingness to use forgiveness in therapy (DiBlasio & Benda, 1991; DiBlasio, 1992; DiBlasio & Proctor, 1993; DiBlasio, 1998; Aponte, 1998). Other studies have investigated the religious belief of clients and how it affected their attitude to forgiveness and willingness to forgive a person who had damaged them.

Those therapists who have used forgiveness therapy usually write from a personal commitment to the Christian religion (for an over view see, Ferch, 1998). They therefore tend to place forgiveness within the perspective of Divine forgiveness. For example,

Pingleton (1997) wrote, “one is not forgiven by God unless one forgives others.” (p.405). Gartner (1988) adopted an object perspective view of forgiveness, he saw the need to be forgiven by God as the theological factor and the forgiveness by an *object* the “psychological necessity” (p. 317-8). The general picture, which emerged from these studies, is that religious therapists are no more likely to use forgiveness therapy than non-religious therapists are. DiBlasio and Benda (1991) noted that “...religious beliefs among practitioners were more influential in general practice ideology than in particular strategies or theoretical linkages” (p. 169-171).

Studies have indicated that religious people may be more familiar with the concept of forgiveness and certain denominations may be more willing to use forgiveness than others. However, the difference between religious and non-religious individuals on attitude and willingness is not significant (Subkoviak et al. 1995; see, Gassin, 1994, for a review). Subkoviak et al. (1995) found that “the religious, in particular, take a positive stance toward more distant others.” (p. 652), for example, participants who belonged to an organised religion (Christian or Jewish) scored higher on forgiveness scores. A common feature of these studies is that they focus on willingness to forgive, in other words on the process of forgiveness. However, Gassin asserts, “...the relationship between faith and forgiveness is far from clear” (p. 11). This pinpoints a weakness in trying to establish a causal link between religious belief and forgiveness. First, knowledge of forgiveness does not automatically mean a person will actually forgive a wrongdoer, or, that they will do so in every situation, and for every person.

The approach of this research is to investigate the content of the construct. It is possible that religious individuals would score significantly higher on all components, indicating strongly agree responses and recording a similarly extreme response in rejecting condoning. Thus their greater knowledge and familiarity with the construct would result in a richer schema and greater discrimination between components. It is possible that differences between religious and non-religious individuals have not emerged previously because the emphasis has been on process rather than content.

#### : Gender

Differences between males and females in their willingness to use forgiveness have been muted. Few significant differences have been identified (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, & Girard, 1998). In some studies men appear to be more willing to



forgive than women but the difference has not always been significant or consistent. Generally, gender differences have been remarkable for their absence. However, it is possible that men and women may place greater importance on different combinations of components. Thus women may place greater emphasis on relationships than men may, or men may be more concerned with a new beginning.

However, in view of the lack of significant gender differences in research to date it is not expected that differences between males and females, or between religious and non-religious groups will be found, except perhaps in marginal components. One important reason for the lack of significant findings may be because forgiveness is perceived as an interpersonal strategy and not a religious dictum. On the other hand, feelings of guilt may be associated with religious belief or experience e.g., feeling guilty because of wrongdoing such as bearing a grudge or breaking a commandment. Therefore, in the response to guilt there might be differences between the religious and non-religious in respect of the Guilt Reduction component. Caution would have to be exercised in generalising from this sample to the population in general.

In addition, as the emphasis on forgiveness in the different religions varies considerably (see Appendix A), it might be expected that the response of participants would vary depending on their religious background. Forgiveness in the Christian tradition appears to be offered from a position of weakness and is motivated by the experience of Divine forgiveness. While in Hinduism and Buddhism forgiveness is more closely linked to maintaining harmony in the community and not to a duty to forgive others. Islam appears to share some common features with the Hebrew tradition; for example, forgiveness seems to be directed to members of the community and for unintentional transgressions. Thus forgiveness is perceived as being individual-focused or community-focused, but for both it is a means of maintaining harmony. In other words, the understanding of forgiveness by different religions is influenced both by religious teaching and the culture. However, the importance of forgiveness as a social facilitator (relationships, healing) might also provide a shared understanding of forgiveness between people. Thus, while differences in understanding between the responses of people of different faiths would be expected for reasons outlined above, there might also be areas of communality based on forgiveness as a prosocial facilitator.

## Study 2

### Hypothesis

#### H1.

There will be a significant difference between the agree responses for religious and nonreligious participants on the Relationships, Guilt Reduction, New Beginning, and Condoning components.

#### H2.

There will be a significant difference between males and females for agree responses for the Relationships, Guilt Reduction, New Beginning, and Condoning components.

### Method

#### Participants

This was an opportunistic sample. The questionnaire was completed by 63 undergraduate students; 40 participants who were present in a senior honours psychology class (total in class 52). There were 32 females and 8 males (Table 8-9a, in Appendix C). One of the female returns was incomplete. As an attempt was to be made to compare males and females it was decided to obtain additional male participants from an Electrical Engineering class. Of the 30 questionnaires distributed 24 were returned. This was a response rate of 91% of those attending the classes chosen.

The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete and was collected from students upon completion.

#### Instrument

The same focus phrases used in Study 1 were used in this study but the instructions were changed to take account of the different response scale. To what extent do you agree that the following phrases represent your own understanding of forgiveness in everyday situations. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used with “Strongly agree” (1) and “Strongly disagree” (5). Participants were asked to respond in two modes: When you are forgiving someone else (Forgiver, FR); When someone else is forgiving you (Forgiven, FN).



Order effects were controlled with half the questionnaires having the forgiver mode first and half the forgiven mode first. Questions concerning religious affiliation, attendance, and religiosity were included.

A Cronbach Alpha was calculated to determine the internal reliability of the scale. The result for the forgiver scale was .831 and for the forgiven scale was .829.

### Statistical Analysis

A Pearson correlation was used to investigate the correlations between focus phrases, between focus phrases and components, and between components. In order to do this the following calculations were undertaken in the forgiver and forgiven modes.

1. The average correlation between the component and the 3 focus phrases which make up that component was calculated.
2. The average correlation between the component and the remaining 9 focus phrases in the same mode was calculated.
3. The average correlation between the component and all the focus phrases (in both modes) excluding the three focus phrases which made up the components (24 focus phrases in all) was calculated.
4. The average correlation between the component and all the focus phrases, excluding the three focus phrases which made up the components and the equivalent component focus phrases in the opposite mode was calculated.

This provided an item analysis for the initial list of focus phrases and their relationship to the components.

Repeated measures ANOVAs used a 2 x 2 x 4 (Mode x Demographic variables x Component) design were conducted to analyse religious and nonreligious groups, age, and gender.

### Procedure

The questionnaire was short enough to be administered prior to the commencement of a lecture. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and hand it back to the

experimenter as soon as they had finished. The same procedure applied to the participants recruited from Electrical Engineering.

Results

Demographic Statistics

Of the 63 students 73% were 20-25 years old (46), 6% (4) were under 20 and 21% (13) were 26 and over (see Table 8-9b, in Appendix C). 46% (29) of the subjects claimed to have no religious affiliation, of those who had religious affiliation 16% (10) were Church of Scotland, 8% (5) Roman Catholic and 27% (17) from other religious groups. In terms of frequency of attendance at a place of worship 16% (10) attended weekly, 2% (1) monthly, 33% (21) sometimes and 49% (31) never. The questions concerning religious belief indicated that 52% (33) believed in God, 21% (13) were neutral and 29% (27) disagreed with belief in God. 43% (27) believed in life after death, 30% (19) were neutral and 27% (17) disagreed with such belief. The measure of religiosity indicated that 34% (21) of the participants described themselves as religious or very religious, 30% (19) as neutral and 35% (22) as not interested or anti-religious.

The participants were similar to the general population in terms of religious belief in that a small percentage were actually committed (16% attend church weekly) but a larger percentage (52%) had a belief in God while over a third held a belief in the after life (43%).

Percentage scores.

The percentage of responses in Study 2 for each focus phrase are given in Table 8-1 (FR) and Table 8-2 (FN) (agree = strongly agree + agree; disagree = strongly disagree + disagree; neutral = neutral).



Table 8-1.  
Percentage Response for Each Focus Phrase: Forgiver Mode

Component	Focus Phrase	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Relationships	patching up...	62%	21%	17%
	restoring...	57%	22%	21%
	shake hands	26%	41%	33%
New Beg.	wiping the slate clean	49%	35%	16%
	a new start	57%	30%	13%
	as if...	42%	19%	39%
Condoning	turning a blind eye	23%	34%	43%
	ignoring	19%	27%	54%
	overlooking	24%	37%	39%
Guilt Red.	set free from guilt	66%	15%	19%
	pardon	70%	19%	11%
	bury the hatchet	60%	23%	17%

Table 8-2.  
Percentage Response for Each Focus Phrase: Forgiven Mode

Component	Focus Phrase	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Relationships	patching up...	64%	25%	11%
	restoring...	56%	25%	19%
	shake hands	27%	37%	36%
New Beg.	wiping the slate clean	51%	30%	19%
	a new start	56%	27%	17%
	as if...	32%	19%	49%
Condoning	turning a blind eye	31%	28%	41%
	ignoring	10%	34%	56%
	overlooking	24%	32%	44%
Guilt Red.	set free from guilt	54%	31%	14%
	pardon	64%	27%	9%
	bury the hatchet	67%	17%	16%

An eyeball impression of (Tables 8-1 and 8-2) indicated that the Guilt Reduction focus phrases received the highest agree responses in both modes. While the Condoning focus phrases received the lowest agree responses with *ignoring* standing out in both modes (19% agree FR; 10% agree FN). In Relationships *shake hands* had a low agree score (26% FR; 27% FN), and the highest neutral score (41%, FR; 37%, FN) which affected the total average score on the component. While *as if it had never happened* in the New Beginning component also received lower scores (42%, FR; 32%, FN).

Table 8-3.

Average Percentage Agree Response Scores for Components

Components	Forgiver (average % score)	Forgiven (average % score)
Relationships	48%**	49%**
New Beginning	49% **	46%**
Condoning	22%	22%
Guilt Reduction	65%**	62%**

\*\*p < .01 level, two-tailed test

In a comparison the average percentage scores for the components in the forgiver mode (Table 8-3), the z scores (Guildford 1965, p. 186) indicated that there was a significant difference between Relationships (48%) and Condoning (22%) the smallest percentage difference,  $z = 3.09$ ,  $N = 63$ ,  $p < .01$ , 2-tailed test. \*Thus the three components, Relationships, New Beginning, and Guilt Reduction were all significantly different to the Condoning component.

Turning to the forgiven mode, the presence of three low percentage focus phrases reduced the average percentage for Relationships (*shake hands*, 27%), New Beginning (*as if it had never happened*, 32%) and Condoning (*ignoring*, 10%). However, an analysis of the z scores indicated that Condoning was significantly different from New Beginning,  $z = 2.86$ ,  $N = 63$ ,  $p < .01$ . Even when the reduced percentage scores for some focus phrases were taken into account Condoning was still distinguishable from the other three components.

The findings above indicated that Condoning was significantly different from the other three components. Due to the small number of participants in the sample it was not appropriate to do a full scale factor analysis at this point.



On a 5-point Likert scale a random response rate of about 20% would be expected, the actual range is 14%-41% (FR) and 17%-37% (FN). As there are fewer than 100 participants caution has to be exercised in using percentages (Guildford, 1965, p. 16) but the range does indicate that participants were not responding randomly and may have used the neutral response when they were uncertain e.g., *shake hands* has the highest neutral response in the FR mode (41%) and FN mode (37%).

#### Chi-square test.

A chi-square test of observed and expected frequencies ranged from  $p < .001$  to  $p < .02$  which supported the results from the percentages data that the responses were not random.

#### Correlations for focus phrases.

Pearson correlations were carried out between the focus phrases and components. Component scores were constructed by adding together scores on the three component focus phrases and dividing by 3. It was to be expected that a focus phrase would correlate highly with its related focus phrases and component score; a focus phrase would correlate only slightly, if at all, with non-related focus phrases and components. This procedure provided for a form of item analysis (see Table 8-4, Appendix C).

#### Correlations for Components.

Details of the correlations are in Table 8-5. New Beginning (FR) correlated with Guilt Reduction (FR) .45,  $N = 59$ ,  $p < .01$  and Guilt Reduction (FN) .33  $N = 61$   $p < .01$ . New Beginning (FN) correlated with Guilt Reduction (FN) .47,  $N = 62$ ,  $p < .01$  and Guilt Reduction (FR) .43,  $N = 60$ ,  $p < .01$ . Guilt Reduction (FN) correlated with Relationships (FN) .27,  $N = 62$ ,  $p < .05$  and in the forgiver mode with Relationships (FN) .29,  $N = 60$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Table 8-5.  
Pearson Correlations Between Relationships, New Beginning, Condoning, and Guilt  
Reduction Components: Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

COMP	FORGIVER				FORGIVEN			
FORGIVE R	R'ships	NB	C	GR	R'ships	NB	C	GR
R'ships	1.00	.09	.10	.17	.65**	.06	.03	.13
NB	.09	1.00	.22	.45**	.04	.71**	.20	.33**
C	.10	.22	1.00	.13	-.13	.06	.59**	-.18
GR	.17	.45**	.13	1.00	.29*	.43**	.05	.65**
FORGIVE N	R'ships	NB	C	GR	R'ships	NB	C	GR
R'ships	.65**	.04	-.13	.29*	1.00	.19	-.15	.27*
NB	.06	.71**	.06	.43**	.19	1.00	.13	.47**
C	.03	.20	.59**	.05	-.15	.13	1.00	-.09
GR	.13	.33**	-.18	.65**	.27*	.47**	-.06	1.00

\*\* p < .01 two-tailed test    \*p < .05 two-tailed test

There were high correlations between forgiver and forgiven mode for individual components. The Relationships component correlated across mode .65, N = 63, p < .001, New Beginning .71, N = 62, p < .001, Condoning .59, N = 59, p < .001, and Guilt Reduction .65, N = 60, p < .001.

Repeated Measures ANOVAs.

Repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted for all the religiosity variables. There were insufficient numbers in all the categories so the groups were recategorised into two groups: Religious and Non-Religious; Belief in Life After Death and Unbelief; Attenders and Non-Attenders; under 25 and over 25; male and female. The ANOVAs were all 2 x 2 x 4 (Mode x Religiosity x Component), (Mode x Age x Component) design.

There were only three significant findings. There was a 3 way interaction effect for Religious (n = 21) and Non-Religious (n = 41), mode by component, F (3, 51) = 3.20, p < .05. The means for the religious group are consistently lower (greater agreement) for all the components in both modes with the exception of Condoning (FR) (Table 8-6 gives the



means and standard deviations). Graphs for the Religious and Non-Religious groups can be found in Appendix C (Tables 8-10a-b).

Table 8-6.

Religious and Non-Religious Group Means and SDs for Relationships, New Beginning, Condoning, and Guilt Reduction Components: Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Component	Group	<i>M</i> (FR)	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> (FN)	<i>SD</i>
Relationships	Religious	2.62	0.72	2.52	0.48
	Non-Religious	2.80	0.70	2.81	0.59
New Beginning	Religious	2.40	0.91	2.68	0.82
	Non-Religious	2.77	0.86	2.75	0.93
Condoning	Religious	3.48	0.84	3.39	0.88
	Non-Religious	3.39	1.05	3.53	0.92
Guilt Reduction	Religious	1.94	0.56	2.37	0.48
	Non-Religious	2.42	0.92	2.40	0.79

The second 3 way interaction effect was for Attenders (*n* = 11) and Non-Attenders (*n* = 52) mode by component  $F(3, 52) = 3.09, p < .05$ . A one-way ANOVA showed  $F(1, 60) = 8.22, p < .01$ . The means for the Attenders were lower for all the components in both modes, with the biggest difference for New Beginning (FR), Attenders *M* = 2.04, Non-Attenders *M* = 2.77 (Table 8-7 gives the means and standard deviations). Graphs for the Attender and Non-Attender groups can be found in Appendix C (Tables 8-10c-d).

Table 8-7.

Attendees and Non-Attendees Group Means and SDs for Relationships, New Beginning, Condoning, and Guilt Reduction Components: Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Component	Group	<i>M</i> (FR)	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> (FN)	<i>SD</i>
Relationships	Attendees	2.72	0.77	2.66	0.42
	Non-Attendees	2.74	0.69	2.71	0.60
New Beginning	Attendees	2.04	0.57	2.56	0.86
	Non-Attendees	2.79	0.88	2.77	0.89
Condoning	Attendees	3.17	0.84	3.03	0.78
	Non-Attendees	3.47	1.00	3.58	0.90
Guilt Reduction	Attendees	1.93	0.60	2.37	0.40
	Non-Attendees	2.37	0.88	2.41	0.75

The third effect was for age, Under 25 (*n* = 50) and Over 25 (*n* = 13) by component *F* (3, 52) 2.97 *p* < .034. A one-way ANOVA showed *F* (1, 60) = 15.03, *p* < .001 (see Table 8-8) for New Beginning in both modes and age (FR Under 25, *M* = 2.49, Over 25, *M* = 3.43; FN Under 25 *M* = 2.58, Over 25, *M* = 3.41).

Table 8-8.

Age Group Means and SDs for Relationships, New Beginning, Condoning, and Guilt Reduction Components: Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Component	Group	<i>M</i> (FR)	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> (FN)	<i>SD</i>
Relationships	Under 25 years	2.69	0.69	2.69	0.54
	Over 25 years	2.93	0.71	2.79	0.72
New Beginning	Under 25 years	2.49	0.75	2.58	0.81
	Over 25 years	3.43	1.05	3.41	0.94
Condoning	Under 25 years	3.43	0.97	3.48	0.90
	Over 25 years	3.36	1.05	3.47	0.94
Guilt Reduction	Under 25 years	2.22	0.83	2.36	0.58
	Over 25 years	2.59	0.94	2.60	1.11



Due to the small numbers in the cells these statistics have to be taken with a great deal of caution. They indicated that religious participants were more likely to give a higher agree response to the components (Relationships, New Beginning and Guilt Reduction) and a greater disagreement to Condoning but the difference between means was relatively small (see Table 8-6).

## Discussion

The results indicate that the participants do share a common understanding (or schema) of forgiveness in the role of forgiver and forgiven. However, their responses to the focus phrases indicate that there is a different application of the schema according to mode.

### Components

The percentage scores indicate that there is a consistency of response between modes which suggests that the mental representation of the construct i.e., the forgiveness schema, is the same whether the individual is in the role of forgiver or forgiven.

There is sufficient variation in percentage scores to suggest that individuals do not adopt exactly the same perspective in both modes. Boon and Sulky (1997) in their study found that the rating of cues differed according to the type of judgement a person is called to make. When rating blame, intent is weighted significantly more than availability, and availability more than severity. However, when forgiveness was involved intent and offence severity were weighted about equally, and both more than avoidability. They make the point that forgiveness is not subject to social norms and is a very private decision and may vary from incident to incident. It may be that the schema for the construct is fixed, but that the kind of information and how it is processed to arrive at a causal analysis may vary with the circumstances of a particular transgression. The implication may be that different transgressions may result in a different profile of the components.

Another reason for the components not being identical between modes is that the victim and transgressor may feel they gain different benefits from a forgiveness act. They will have their own perspective of the transgression, this could be explained through the effect of the self-serving bias and the kind of account the transgressor offers (Gonzales, Manning, & Haugen, 1992). In addition, the future character of the relationship will make different demands in relation to duties and responsibilities on the two people involved. These factors may account for the distinction which seems to be made in certain focus



phrases across modes. For example, the Relationships component does not significantly correlate with any other component in the forgiver mode, but has a significant correlation with Guilt Reduction (in the forgiven mode). The Relationships focus phrase *patching up a broken relationship* only correlates inter-componently in the forgiver mode but in the forgiven mode correlates with Guilt Reduction (*set free from guilt*, FR; *bury the hatchet*, FR) and New Beginning (*a new start*, FN). Relationships appears to be an independent component, unlike Guilt Reduction and New Beginning which are significantly correlated. From this analysis New Beginning seems to have a closer relationship with Guilt Reduction in respondent's understanding of the construct. Finally, Relationships is unlike Condoning which is separate because of the low agreement responses.

#### Choice of key phrase.

A question was included which asked for participants to choose a key phrase in each mode and rank them from 1 to 3. Only the first choice in both modes is compared. In the forgiver mode the order is *restoring a broken relationship* (fq.13), *patching up a broken relationship* (fq. 10) *set free from guilt* and *pardon* (fq. 9). While in the forgiven mode the order is slightly different, *patching up a broken relationship* (fq. 12), *pardon* (fq. 10), *restoring a broken relationship* (fq. 9), *wiping the slate clean* and *set free from guilt* (fq. 8). The frequencies of the two relationship focus phrases indicate that relationships is a key factor when a person thinks of forgiveness, regardless of mode. In both modes participants agree that a release from feelings of guilt is important, which in the forgiven mode includes the idea of a new start. However, the target for the release of guilt may be the other person in the case of an individual forgiving, but in the forgiven mode the target person may be the self. Certainly a correlation was found between Guilt Reduction and Relationships in the forgiven mode.

#### Focus phrases.

The main findings of the correlational analysis of the focus phrases was that all the focus phrases correlated significantly with their respective component and focus phrases in both modes (see Table 8-4 in Appendix C). The correlation in the forgiver mode for component focus phrases ranged from 0.87 to 0.70, in the forgiven mode from 0.86 to 0.64. However, from Table 8-4 it can be seen that there was a very low correlation between non-component focus phrases and a component. Overall, there was a lower correlation between the forgiver and forgiven component focus phrases when correlated in the opposite mode, i.e., forgiven



focus phrases with the forgiver mode 0.54 to 0.42; forgiver focus phrases with the forgiven mode 0.46 to 0.58. However, the correlations for component focus phrases were still higher than non-component focus phrases.

Generally, all the focus phrases correlated significantly with all the other focus phrases within the component. However, there were exceptions, most notably *shake hands* which only correlated significantly with *ignoring* (FR) and itself (FN mode). While *as if it had never happened* also correlated significantly with condoning focus phrases. There was a significant correlation between the focus phrases for the New Beginning and Guilt Reduction components. From the correlational analysis it would seem that some focus phrases may correlate significantly with more than one component e.g., *as if it had never happened*; others solely within the component e.g., *patching up a broken relationship* and *restoring a broken relationship*; and some not even with their component focus phrases e.g., *shake hands*.

The similar pattern of significant correlations occurred between focus phrases in the forgiver and forgiven mode. However, there were some notable exceptions. For example, *patching up a broken relationship* in the forgiven mode was significantly correlated with Guilt Reduction (FR, FN), *set free from guilt* (FR) and *bury the hatchet* (FR), which indicated a broader perspective than in the forgiver mode (where the only significant correlation was with its component focus phrases). Conversely, other focus phrases showed a more restricted correlation, i.e., *shake hands* only correlated significantly with its component and itself in the forgiven mode. While the most surprising finding was that *set free from guilt* only correlated significantly in the forgiven mode with Guilt Reduction and *overlooking* whereas there were ten significant correlations in the forgiver mode.

The impression from the correlational analysis is that focus phrases behave fairly consistently across modes with the exceptions already noted. The correlation with their own component is higher than that of noncomponent focus phrases.

Some focus phrases such as *patching up a broken relationship* and *restoring a broken relationship* (Relationships) receive over 56% - 64% agreement in both modes. Similarly the three focus phrases in the Guilt Reduction component range from 54% to 70% agreement.

While the condoning focus phrases are rejected, (56% to 38% disagree responses) 33% of the respondents in both modes still record agree responses and presumably do not have a negative view of the component. Thus, for almost a third of the sample some aspects of condoning do form part of their understanding of the construct. Writers in the



field would dismiss this as pseudoforgiveness or a false forgiveness. However, in some situations to turn a blind eye, ignore, or overlook a transgression might be a way of continuing the relationship, or avoiding needless confrontation. It is a strategy, which a parent might adopt with a teenager's misdemeanour attributing the cause to situational factors rather than dispositional ones e.g., stress due to examinations.

There are focus phrases, which do not appear to "fit" into their component, perhaps because participants interpret their meaning differently. For example, *shake hands* does not correlate significantly with its component focus phrases and has a lower correlation within mode (.47, FR; .46, FN). This was surprising as it was felt the phrase was a symbolic gesture representing acceptance and a greeting. However, the participants in this study may be making a distinction between social gestures (norms) for ordinary social interactions and the kind of physical gesture, which would indicate forgiveness between dyads. It suggests that the forgiveness schema may be quite specific in what people see as appropriate and inappropriate nonverbal behaviour.

One focus phrase, which receives a different response in Study 2 from Study 1, is *as if it had never happened* (New Beginning component). In the forgiver mode 41% agree and in the forgiven mode 32% agree. In both modes it correlates significantly with the Condoning component (FR/FN). It appears that participants interpreted the phrase as more like Condoning than New Beginning, and therefore gave a more negative rating. Thus the meaning may have been understood as closer to Nelson's blind eye than to any idea of wiping the slate clean, thus blotting out the transgression.

A chi- $\chi^2$  test for expected and actual frequencies proved to be highly significant for all the focus phrases in both modes, which lends support to the indication from percentage data that the responses were not random.

### Religious and Nonreligious Groups

The first null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences between the agree responses for religious and nonreligious participants on Relationships, Guilt Reduction, New Beginning and Condoning. The sample was not particularly irreligious (51% believed in God, 41% believed in life after death). A repeated measures ANOVA found only three significant differences.

First, there was an interaction effect for religiosity, mode, and component (Tables 8-9a-b). Second, there was an interaction effect for attendance, mode, and component (Tables 8-9c-d). Religiosity was measured by a self-report questions which asked



participants to rate how religious they regarded themselves (very religious, religious, neutral, not interested, and anti-religious) and the second a measure of commitment asking the frequency of attendance at a place of worship e.g., weekly, monthly. The means for the Religious and Attenders groups for the Relationships, New Beginning and Guilt Reduction components were lower than the means of their counterparts, indicating greater agreement for all components. The exception was for the Condoning component for the Religious group the higher mean indicated greater disagreement. Thus the Religious group and the Attenders group tended to give more extreme responses for all the components.

The 3-way interaction between religiosity (in terms of self-confessed religiousness and church attendance), mode and component is difficult to interpret. The Religious group agree more with Guilt Reduction in the forgiver mode than the forgiven (FR,  $M = 1.90$ ; FN  $M = 2.37$ ). Whereas the Non-Religious group do not discriminate between the modes (FR,  $M = 2.4$ ; FN,  $M = 2.40$ ). When attendance is examined the Attenders group (FR,  $M = 1.93$ ; FN,  $M = 2.37$ ) and the Non-Attenders group (FR,  $M = 2.37$ ; FN,  $M = 2.41$ ) show the same pattern of response for Guilt Reduction. A similar difference is also found for the New Beginning component for Attenders (FR,  $M = 2.04$ ; FN,  $M = 2.56$ ) and Non-Attenders (FR,  $M = 2.79$ ; FN,  $M = 2.77$ ). A Tukey HSD test indicated that there were significant differences between the means of Attenders and Non-Attenders for the New Beginning component, forgiver mode only. It is possible that Attenders associate forgiveness in the forgiver mode with a new start, that is they have initiated a move towards reconciliation and possible restoration of the relationship. Why this should be restricted to one mode is not clear.

It is difficult to explain the different responses between the Religious and Non-Religious groups for Guilt Reduction. Religious people (this sample would be predominantly of the Christian tradition) model forgiveness on Divine forgiveness. The focus phrases (*set free from guilt*, *pardon*, and *bury the hatchet*) all indicate that the forgiver is removing the guilt from the wrongdoer. In a similar way the sinner has their guilt removed by God. Perhaps for the Religious group dealing with guilt is salient in the role of forgiver, an active role. But in the more passive role of being forgiven the schema is more global.

Gassin (1998) in her study of accepting another's forgiveness found that one of the personal psychological effects of accepting forgiveness was a release from guilt (p. 81). Release from guilt was also mentioned among the personal benefits of forgiveness. Her sample was small ( $N = 10$ ) and all but one claimed some religious affiliation, the majority



being Protestants ( $n = 7$ ). It would appear that this is a finding which requires further investigation.

It should also be recognised that other world religions e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, or Judaism might well emphasise different aspects or approaches to forgiveness (for a more detailed discussion see Appendix A). For example, Hinduism and Buddhism would place less emphasis on guilt reduction, as these religions do not have the same concept of sin as Christianity. As a consequence, different religions might have distinctive components for forgiveness e.g., release from suffering for Hinduism and Buddhism; obedience to Allah for Islam; and obedience to the Law for Judaism. However, some components may be held in common across different religions. Subsequent research developments should include the investigation of the role of forgiveness in cultures where religions, other than Christianity, are dominant.

Looking at the overall picture the religious/non-religious dichotomy may not be a useful one. Perhaps a distinction should rather be drawn between individuals' *knowledge* of the construct i.e., content and their actual *use* as an interpersonal strategy. The link between religiosity and forgiveness is a traditional one based on the Christian model of forgiveness and maintained in counselling through forgiveness therapy. However, the approach of this research is that forgiveness is an interpersonal strategy and is not dependent on religious belief per se. This perspective would appear to be supported by the small differences in the means between Religious and Non-Religious participants.

However, in view of the small numbers in the groups and the caution required in explaining the statistics because of making a Type I Error the first null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Both religious and nonreligious participants share a similar understanding of the construct. The reason for not obtaining additional participants to avoid re-categorising the groups was because at this stage it was not clear whether the changing environmental circumstances with the passage of time might affect participants' responses. It was felt to be preferable for the initial investigations that participants completed the questionnaire on the same day. In addition, the study was completed at the end of the summer term and therefore student availability was restricted.

## Age

The third interaction effect was for age, (Under 25, 50; Over 25, 13), and component. A one-way ANOVA indicated that the difference between the means for New Beginning between the groups was significant,  $F(1,60) 15.0264, p < .0003$ . The under 25s agreed



with New Beginning ( $M = 2.49$ , FR;  $M = 2.58$ , FN) compared with the older group who were neutral ( $M = 3.43$ , FR;  $M = 3.41$ , FN). As the numbers are not equal for the two groups this statistic must be viewed with caution. Girard and Mullet (1997) found that “restoration of harmony appeared to be a factor more important in adolescents than in adults and elderly people.” (p. 218). Perhaps the importance of a new beginning could be linked with a desire to restore harmony. This finding suggests that younger people find it easier than older adults to “put the past behind them”. This may be an artefact of their youth and inexperience, while older people may be more cautious and want assurances of future good behaviour.

### Gender

The second hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences between males and females. As with other studies (Girard & Mullet, 1997; Enright, Santos, & Al-Mabuk, 1989; Azar, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, 1999) this proved to be the case and the fourth null hypothesis is accepted.

Research to date has identified few significant gender differences between men and women. For instance, Azar, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, (1999) found that the effect of the cancellation factor was higher for women than men. Perhaps as social roles within society have changed and men become more nurturing and women more assertive, dominance characteristics and gender differences due to socialisation will not be so apparent, especially in studies using questionnaires or survey methods. Child rearing practices and social norms mean that boys and girls will be treated similarly in school and probably in the home. Therefore, differences in the understanding of forgiveness may be more attributable to other factors such as forgiving or non-forgiving child rearing practices, personality, and culture rather than gender.

### Conclusion

Studies 1 and 2 were explorative, their object was to establish the components which combined together to form the construct of forgiveness. It was not felt to be a final list of components, nor were the focus phrases necessarily the most useful ones, or located within the most relevant component i.e., the one providing the best “family resemblance” (Rosch, 1975). The studies were meant to provide indicators for future research. Certain factors have been identified. Individuals do make a distinction between components, which are

part of forgiveness and those which are not i.e., Condoning. The mode of response does have an effect on the choice of a response for a particular focus phrase. Further studies are needed to clarify these differences. While these two exploratory studies failed to detect gender or religious effects this may be due, in part, to the small sample.

The basic list of focus phrases and components needs to be reviewed and extended to ensure that it is comprehensive. Condoning was initially included as a control to check that participants would distinguish between components. However, the picture is not as clear-cut as some writers maintain (Murphy & Hampton, 1990). Certainly for the majority of participants condoning is rejected as part of their understanding of forgiveness, however, there is still a core of people who respond neutrally or agree that it is part of their understanding of forgiveness.

The correlation between Guilt Reduction and New Beginning in both modes may indicate a strong relationship. New Beginning might involve the idea of release or Hargrave's (1994) *exonerating* (from the burden of the transgression not responsibility for the action). It is possible that there can be no new beginning or new start for either party without some alleviation of negative affect and cognitions, which may be associated with guilt. The role of Relationships is unclear, that is whether it is part of Guilt Reduction-New Beginning, or is a separate component. The fact that focus phrases correlate with other components points to the need for a sample of sufficient size to permit a factor analysis of the measure. The third study begins to address these issues.



## CHAPTER 9

### THE COMPONENTS OF THE CONSTRUCT OF FORGIVENESS

*Forgiving is not a commonplace routine gesture. It is not an everyday occurrence.* (Rubio, 1986, p. 81)

The aim of this study is fivefold. First, to produce a list of components which adequately reflected the complexity of the construct. Second, to make a clear distinction between the content of the construct and the process of forgiving. Third, to provide a measure which could be equally appropriate to an individual operating either as forgiver, or as one forgiven. Finally, to produce a measure which was not based on any preconceptions of forgiveness, i.e., as a virtue, as moral, as closely tied to religious (Christian) belief, love (agape), a gift, or object relations theory and which would be suitable for the general population.

Although studies appear to acknowledge the complexity of forgiveness, that is it is a multi-dimensional construct, in reality many studies appear to treat the construct as a simple one. One possible reason for this is the failure to distinguish between the construct of forgiveness and the process. A componential approach clearly specifies what factors actually comprise the construct without having to label forgiveness as developmental or to describe the stages through which a victim has to pass before they have forgiven the offender. It is felt that the componential approach allows the construct a neutrality, which might make it more acceptable as an interpersonal strategy free from religious connotations and obligations. Also, it might provide a useful theoretical framework in order to explain the development of a forgiveness strategy.

The four components with their associated focus phrases were not intended to be exhaustive. Therefore, the next step was to extend the list to make it a more adequate measure of a multidimensional construct. In order to maintain continuity, and to keep the measure from becoming cumbersome, the technique of using three focus phrases per component was retained.

The three additional components namely Religious, Legal, and Healing may help to address Aponte's (1998) comment, "...the call to forgive may have its source in the psychological, legal or religious, or a combination of all three" (p. 42). Certainly, the religious component is an obvious one given the antecedents of forgiveness. Religious individuals may be more willing to adopt a forgiveness strategy, due to their greater familiarity with the concept and presumably, more favourable perception of it (Scobie, 1975). The inclusion of a specifically religious component allows the relationship between religiosity and perception of forgiveness to be made salient for the participant. In addition, if for some individuals forgiveness has a religious imperative then it would be expected that responses to a Religious component would clearly distinguish between religious and non-religious individuals.

### Religious Component

The following three focus phrases were identified to access the Religious component. The first focus phrase was, *we must forgive our enemies if we expect forgiveness*, and is a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, (forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us). The second focus phrase was, *God forgives us, so we must forgive other people*, and is the Christian rationale for espousing a forgiveness strategy which is all-inclusive i.e., not limited to close kin. The problem with the wording is it includes a specific reference to God. It could mean that nonreligious individuals would reject the phrase automatically. The last focus phrase was, *love keeps no record of wrongs*, and describes rejection of an "accountant approach" to transgressions i.e., keeping a strict list of all misdemeanours.

Forgiveness literature implies that individuals who are familiar with forgiveness through their religious (Christian) belief will have a more favourable attitude towards its use in interpersonal relations (Smedes, 1983). DiBlasio (1993) comments, "The more religious group of social workers held a favorable attitude toward forgiveness." (p. 167). While McCullough and Worthington (1994) add, "forgiveness might be frequently used in counseling, especially by counselors who readily identify with explicitly Christian professional organizations." (p. 7). Aponte (1998) agrees, "My idea of forgiveness grows more from the religious soil of spirituality" (p. 42). (Study 2, "frequency of attendance at place of worship" had significant interaction effect but no discernible pattern because of low numbers. However, weekly attenders did have lower scores ( $p = < .04$ ) which might indicate a greater familiarity with the construct). The results of research into the way



religious belief (Christian) affect willingness to adopt a forgiveness strategy in interpersonal relations are ambiguous. To date there have been no significant results that suggest religious people hold a distinctly “religious” view or attitude towards forgiveness. This study takes us just a little further along the road of establishing whether forgiveness is a commonly held concept influenced by the prevailing religious and cultural beliefs and practices of the particular community or society to which the individual belongs.

### Legal

It is possible that a legal approach to forgiveness could be compared to Restitutional or Compensational forgiveness i.e., forgiving if compensation or restoration is offered (Enright, Santos, & Al-Mabuk, 1989). It may also reflect the legalism, which characterised the writing of the Early Church in their discussion of forgiveness. The Early Fathers (Mackintosh, 1927) experienced great difficulty with the concept, a view that is reflected in Kant’s rejection of the possibility of actually being able to forgive a transgression. His attitude is reflected by certain researchers in psychotherapy (Davenport, 1991) and philosophy (Murphy & Hampton, 1990; Murphy, 1982) who claim that if one forfeits one’s lawful right to moral restitution the result is tantamount to condoning a moral evil. This kind of thinking led theologians to hedge forgiveness around with certain safeguards. There was a demand for a response indicating repentance; an acknowledgement of wrongdoing and an indication of remorse. Today, if a person fails to show remorse for their criminal actions they are more likely to get a stiffer sentence from the court. What is required of a wrongdoer is a statement of intention, which in effect is a guarantee of future good conduct accompanied by some outward show of remorse or penance. These are still the necessary prerequisites for forgiveness for certain groups or individuals.

The three focus phrases which it was felt encapsulated these ideas were: *remit the penalty of*, *amnesty*, and *acquit*. All three have the idea of a punishment or penalty to be paid but which is waived by someone in authority; in the case of forgiveness that “someone” is the forgiver.

The idea that forgiveness might be “free” without prior conditions was, and is, a difficult pill for many people to swallow. The focus phrases reflect the legal dimension of forgiveness. The first embodies the idea that a deserved punishment or penalty is removed, or in the words of the Old Testament “covered over”. *Amnesty* has a similar meaning, the call for retribution or punishment is “held over”. While the last focus phrase, *acquit* can be

compared and contrasted to the other two focus phrases. Its meaning implies a “not guilty” verdict and therefore the person is no longer guilty and worthy of punishment. There is an element of condoning in the third focus phrase which is not so evident in the other two focus phrases, these seem to imply that the person is still seen as guilty but that the punishment is being held over (perhaps pending repentance, an indication of remorse, and changed behaviour).

A legal perspective to transgressions contrasts with a religious one. There are those who will forgive but hedge their forgiveness around with criteria which have to be met first (the accountant-approach - Murphy and Hampton, 1990; Graham, 1991). Those who demand repentance as a condition of forgiveness are adopting a legalistic perspective. The inclusion of religious and legal components may ensure that all aspects of the construct of forgiveness are represented, reflecting its multi-dimensional character.

### Healing

The decision to exclude healing as a component in the first two studies seemed inappropriate for this more extensive study. Healing was not included in Studies 1 and 2 because it was felt that it was implicitly present in the Relationships and New Beginning components. However, this omission did not appear to be justified, as other components do not appear to be discrete and independent units i.e., the correlation between New Beginning and Guilt Reduction.

The claims for the health benefits for forgiveness are long-standing (Beck, 1976; Hope, 1987; Fitzgibbons, 1986). Gassin (1994) in her review of empirical literature suggested that there is evidence of a positive effect on the health of those who forgive from both correlational and experimental studies. However, these studies generally record a willingness to forgive (Subkoviak et al. 1995) or signing a declaration to forgive (Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995). There is always a discrepancy between what people report in a laboratory situation and how they react in real-life. In addition, the majority of studies used clinical samples and the health benefits to the non-clinical population may be less important than relational factors.

The Healing focus phrases were chosen to reflect a stronger affect element than is perhaps present in other components. The first, *no longer hurting* was used to convey the feeling that forgiveness heals the emotional damage (not necessarily physical damage) caused by the transgression. In other words, the “harmony is restored” (Kselman &



Shogren, 1992, p. 831). Both in terms of loss of self-esteem and the loss, in Bowlbian terms, of a valued relationship. The second focus phrase (*broken wounds healed*) was pictorial, drawing on the poetic image of transgressions being like physical wounds and requiring time to heal. Calian (1980) uses the phrase “open wounds take time to heal.” (p. 442). The final focus phrase (*feeling better about yourself*) draws attention to the restoration of a positive self-image, partly because one has performed a selfless act of forgiveness and partly because of the consequences of the act i.e., restoration of a valued relationship, freedom from rehearsal of wrongs, release from guilt. All three focus phrases can be identified in forgiveness literature, both in books on counselling and in studies.

### Other

The other category was comprised of focus phrases, which were to be retained as filler items. The first focus phrase *shake hands* in Studies 1 and 2 seemed to have some significance for men but not for women, therefore it was retained for further clarification. Another focus phrase, *kiss and make-up* (Walrond-Skinner, 1998) which had a more obvious affective element replaced *shake hands* as the third focus phrase in the Relationships component. The other two focus phrases could fit into more than one component.

The second focus phase, *cease to feel resentment* could equally fit Guilt Reduction, Healing, or Relationships. While *set free* was a vaguer term than *set free from guilt*, it might provide a more general description of the range of feelings forgiveness produced in a person when they acted in the separate role of forgiver and forgiven.

### Schema

The way individuals use schemas to categorise events, people, and things has been the subject of a great deal of research. Although the empirical evidence is the subject of much discussion it would appear that the notion of a schema is a useful one and unlikely to be abandoned by researchers (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Schemas are functional and are the result of social interaction; thus they can be modified and added to over time.

Schema theory could usefully be applied to the construct of forgiveness. Alba and Hasher (1983) state that, “the term schema has no fixed definition...[but] is most often used to refer to the general knowledge a person possesses about a particular domain.” (p. 203). A forgiveness schema may provide a framework for attending to and organising information at the encoding stage (perception of a transgression) and for the efficient and effective retrieval of relevant information (cognition, affect and behaviour associated with the transgression-forgiveness or transgression-no forgiveness event). Thus questions were included which encouraged individuals to utilise their forgiveness schema. They were asked to recall a forgiveness event, which was personal, involved a friend or relative, or a fictional character. In this way participants would use “general knowledge” either as a prototype or an exemplar. Most individuals who respond in terms of personal, relative or friend, or fictional character, will be using an actual experience. It is suggested that individuals have a schema for forgiveness. This study invited individuals to generate a schema (prototype or exemplar) of a forgiveness experience and to respond to the questionnaire with that particular prototype or exemplar in mind.

To summarise, the study was designed to provide a comprehensive list of components, which represented an individual’s understanding of the construct of forgiveness, both as a forgiver and one forgiven. The following hypotheses are a re-run of those in Chapter 8 except that they are applied to the new revised scale.

### Study 3

#### Hypothesis

##### Ho1.

There will be no significant differences between the scores of religious and nonreligious participants for each of the seven components; Relationships, Guilt Reduction, New Beginning, Healing, Religious, Legal, and Condoning.

##### Ho2.

There will be no significant differences between the scores of men and women for each of the seven components; Relationships, Guilt Reduction, New Beginning, Healing, Religious, Legal, and Condoning.



## Method

### Participants

The 83 participants were psychology or philosophy undergraduates at the University of Glasgow. They were approached at the beginning of their class lecture and asked to complete the questionnaire. Five people were unwilling to participate, and six questionnaires were incomplete and therefore excluded from the study, 72 out of 83 (87%) completed the questionnaire.

### Instrument

A review of the components and focus phrases was undertaken and three additional components were added to the questionnaire: Healing, Religious, and Legal this required 9 additional focus phrases taken from phrases used in forgiveness literature and agreed by a focus group of five people. Minor changes to improve the wording of focus phrases were made, (*patching* became *patch*, *wiping* became *wipe*, *restoring* became *restore*, and *as if it had never happened* became *as if it never happened*). A complete list of the seven components and their accessing focus phrases is in Appendix D (Table 9-1).

The focus group also examined the wording of the instructions and after the results of a pilot study changes were agreed in order to ensure that participants responded in two different roles i.e., as a forgiver and one forgiven. As a consequence, different headings were printed for each mode:

You are in the role of FORGIVER

You are in the role of FORGIVEN

The same Likert scaling was used as in Study 2. Participants were instructed to: Please circle one answer for each phrase representing your own understanding of forgiveness. The reference to “everyday situations” used in previous studies was omitted as it was felt that forgiveness did not take place everyday, it was a distinctive response to a particularly salient negative event. As *shake hands* had received a high neutral response in an earlier study and low agreement in both modes it was decided to replace it with *kiss and make up* as a measure of the Relationships component but to retain it as a filler phrase. This latter phrase had the advantage of being easily understood and included an affective element absent in a more formal, symbolic gesture.

Order effects were controlled with half the questionnaires having the forgiver mode first and half the forgiven mode first. Demographic questions were placed last and included questions on religious affiliation, attendance, and 3 measures of religiosity.

Finally, a section was included at the beginning of the questionnaire asking participants to recall a personal experience of acting in the role of forgiver and forgiven. If they were unable to do so, they were asked to recall an event when a friend or relative acted in these roles; failing that a fictional character. If individuals could answer in the affirmative to any of these questions they presumably had some kind of schema for forgiveness. The personal memory might be more salient and easily accessible than a relative or friend or fictional account of forgiveness. However, an example of forgiveness from fiction would be better than none. Those individuals who were unable to answer either of these questions and thus claimed to have a very limited experience of forgiveness, as a forgiver or as one forgiven, (i) might not have a salient forgiveness schema or (ii) might find it more difficult to access a schema without some kind of a prompt. (This latter point was taken up in a later study). After completing the schema questions participants were instructed to answer the questions for the forgiveness measure.

A Cronbach Alpha was calculated to determine the internal reliability of the scale. The result for the forgiver scale was .831 and for the forgiven scale was .829.

Establishing the validity of the test is more difficult. An attempt to relate this scale to other forgiveness scales was undertaken and reported in Chapter 12.

### Statistical analysis

Likert scales are more correctly viewed as ordinal scales rather than interval scales. While participants may be placed in their rank order researchers cannot be confident that the distance between "Strongly agree" and "Agree" (1 and 2) is the same as the distance between "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree" (4 and 5). As Oskamp (1977) comments, "The two distances are numerically equal, but they may not be psychologically equal." (p. 37). Therefore, researchers should more properly use nonparametric tests to statistically analyse ordinal scales. However, while Oskamp's (1977) acknowledged the problem he observed, "...these restrictions are almost universally disregarded, largely because statistical research has shown that in most instances violations of the assumptions underlying the use of parametric techniques do not lead to serious distortions of their results." (p. 37). As a consequence, parametric tests have also been used in the analysis.



Chi-square tests were conducted to ascertain the actual and expected frequencies of responses to the focus phrases. Pearson correlations were used to investigate the correlations between focus phrases, between focus phrases and components, and between components. The calculations detailed in Chap. 8 for the Pearson correlations were used for the final list of focus phrases. Repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to analyse the demographic and religious variables.

For the purpose of the first analysis the Likert scale was treated as 5 categories and chi-square tests were conducted to compare participants' understanding of the focus phrases in the forgiver and forgiven modes. It is also possible to consider the Likert labels as five equidistant points on a continuum (Oskamp, 1991). This perspective enabled parametric tests to be used to compare differences between age, gender and religiosity and to produce a correlation matrix for the focus phrases and components.

### Procedure

The questionnaire was designed to avoid order effects. For half the questionnaires the focus phrases ran from *patch up...* to *kiss and make up* (1-24) the other half from *kiss and make up...* to *patch up...* (24-1). These two orders of focus phrases applied to the forgiver and forgiven modes. Altogether there were four sequences of questionnaire order; each questionnaire order was colour coded for ease of identification.

Participants were approached before the beginning of a lecture and asked to complete the questionnaire, only 5 people refused. The four orders of questionnaire were randomly distributed. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete and was collected in immediately after completion. Participants were thanked for their assistance and given a contact name for details of the results.

## Results

### Demographic Statistics

The demographic questions indicate that of the 72 participants 27 were male, 41 were female and 4 individuals failed to answer the question (Table 9-11a in Appendix D). The majority of the group were under twenty-five, (under 20, 37%; between 20-25, 45.2%; 26-30, 4.1%; and over 30, 6.8%) (Table 9-11b in Appendix D). The measures of religiosity revealed that 20.5% regarded themselves as "very religious" (4.1%) or "religious" (16.4%). While the majority (58.9%) were "non-religious" and 13.7% were "anti-religious". In the

two questions of belief, “belief in life after death” was fairly evenly split with 38.3% responding “strongly agree” or “agree”, 32.9% “neutral” and 20.6% “disagreeing” or “strongly disagreeing”. “Belief in God” received a less positive response, 27.4% “strongly agree” or “agree”, 41% “neutral” and 21.9% “disagree” or “strongly disagree”. The responses for “frequency of attendance at a place of worship” reflect the trend in the previous answers with 58.9% “never” attending, 20.5% “sometimes”, 5.5% “monthly” and 6.8% “weekly”. Finally, the question of religious affiliation identified two groups, Christian 32.9% (24) and “None” 54.8% (40) other groups were very small (1 Jew, 1 Muslim and 3 “other”).

In general this was a predominately nonreligious sample, especially as there was a higher proportion of women who tend to be more religious than men in the sample. Thus the participants are a young, mainly female adolescent group, with the majority regarding themselves as nonreligious.

Details of the percentage response rate for the focus phrases in the forgiver and forgiven modes can be found in Appendix D (Tables 9-2 and 9-3).

### Chi-square test

A chi-square test of observed and expected frequencies for the response rate for each of the focus phrases indicated that all the focus phrases were significant between modes, apart from *set free from guilt* (FR) and *we must forgive our enemies if we expect forgiveness* (FN). The significance level for the focus phrases ranged from  $p < .001$  to  $p < .0045$  (*as if it never happened*, FR).

The overall findings were similar to Study 2 in so far as the components correlated highly with its constituent focus phrases. Moderately with the corresponding focus phrases in the other mode and much less with the noncomponent focus phrases.

Table 9-4 (Appendix D) and Tables 9-5 and 9-6 provide the intercorrelations between the components in both the forgiver and forgiven modes.



Table 9-5.  
Pearson Correlations Between the Seven Components in the Forgiver Mode

Comp.	R (FR)	NB (FR)	H (FR)	GR (FR)	C (FR)	L (FR)	Rg (FR)
Forgiver							
R	1	.52**	.48**	.33**	.06	.12	.28*
NB	.52**	1	.40**	.46**	.20	.28*	.39**
H	.48**	.39**	1	.46**	.10	.11	.08
GR	.33**	.46**	.46**	1	.05	.58**	.32**
C	.06	.20	.10	.05	1	.10	.24*
L	.12	.28*	.11	.58**	.10	1	.31*
Rg	.28*	.39**	.08	.32**	.24*	.31*	1
Forgiven							
R	.64**	.39**	.36**	.15	-.01	-.03	.18
NB	.47**	.49**	.25*	.40**	.04	.14	.18
H	.21	.31*	.37**	.24	-.13	.04	.09
GR	.27*	.51**	.27*	.61**	-.11	.44**	.22
C	.28*	.28*	.26*	.27*	.67**	.24	.14
L	.18	.41**	.05	.50**	-.00	.74**	.11
Rg	.30*	.34**	.17	.27*	.16	.12	.80**

\*\* p < .01 two-tailed test    \* p < .05 two-tailed test

Table 9-6.  
Pearson Correlations Between the Seven Components in the Forgiven Mode

Comp.	R (FN)	NB (FN)	H (FN)	GR (FN)	C (FN)	L (FN)	Rg (FN)
Forgiver							
R	.64**	.47**	.21*	.27*	.28*	.18	.30*
NB	.38**	.49**	.31*	.51**	.28*	.41**	.34**
H	.36**	.25*	.37**	.27*	.26*	.05	.17
GR	.15	.35**	.24	.61**	.27*	.50**	.27*
C	-.01	.04	-.13	-.11	.67**	-.00	.16
L	-.03	.14	.04	.44**	.24	.74**	.12
Rg	.18	.18	.09	.22	.14	.11	.80**
Forgiven							
R	1	.44**	.42**	.36**	.03	.07	.30*
NB	.44**	1	.37**	.53**	.24*	.27*	.12
H	.42**	.37**	1	.43**	.16	.26*	.19
GR	.36**	.53**	.43**	1	.12	.49**	.20
C	.03	.24*	.16	.12	1	.25	.09
L	.07	.27*	.26*	.49**	.25	1	.04
Rg	.30*	.12	.19	.20	.09	.04	1

\*\* p < .01 two-tailed test    \* p < .05 two-tailed test

The correlations between the components formed two separate groups. The first consisted of core components (Table 9-7) and the second group of non-core components (Table 9-8).

Table 9-7.  
Significant Correlations Between Core Components in the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Components	Relationships	New Beginning	Guilt Reduction	Healing
Relationships	(0.64)**	0.52** (0.44)**	0.33** (0.36)**	0.48** (0.42)**
New Beginning	0.52** (0.44)**	(0.49)**	0.46** (0.53)**	0.39** (0.37)**
Guilt Reduction	0.33** (0.36)**	0.46** (0.53)**	(0.61)**	0.46** (0.43)**
Healing	0.48** (0.42)**	0.39** (0.37)**	0.46** (0.43)**	(0.37)**
Legal	--	0.28** (0.27)**	0.58** (0.49)**	- (0.26)*
Religious	0.28* (0.30)*	0.39** (-)	0.32** (-)	--
Condoning	--	- (0.24)*	--	--

forgiven correlations in brackets  
\*\* p < .01 two-tailed \* p < .05 two-tailed

Table 9-8.  
Significant Correlations Between Non-Core Components in the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Components	Legal	Religious	Condoning
Legal	-- (0.74)**	0.31* (-)	--
Religious	0.31* (-)	-- (0.80)**	0.24 (-)
Condoning	--	0.24* (-)	-- (0.67)**

forgiven in brackets  
\*\* p < .01 two-tailed \* p < .05 two-tailed

The distribution of responses calculated for the components in each mode are presented in Tables 9-9 and 9-10.

Table 9-9.  
Percentage and Frequency Statistics for Responses on a 5-Point Likert Scale to the Components in the Forgiver Mode

Forgiver Components	Agree Under 2.6	Neutral 2.6 - 3.4	Disagree greater than 3.4
Relationships	38 (57%)	20 (30%)	9 (13%)
New Beginning	20 (30%)	37 (55%)	10 (15%)
Healing	23 (34%)	34 (51%)	10 (15%)
Guilt Reduction	31 (47%)	26 (39%)	9 (14%)
Condoning	5 (8%)	27 (41%)	34 (51%)
Legal	18 (29%)	36 (57%)	9 (14%)
Religious	11 (16%)	23 (34%)	33 (49%)



Table 9-10.  
Percentage and Frequency Statistics for Responses on a 5-Point Likert Scale to the  
Components in the Forgiven Mode

Forgiver	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Components	Under 2.6	2.6 - 3.4	greater than 3.4
Relationships	41 (61%)	18 (27%)	8 (12%)
New Beginning	20 (29%)	34 (50%)	14 (21%)
Healing	27 (40%)	30 (45%)	10 (15%)
Guilt Reduction	32 (49%)	29 (45%)	4 (6%)
Condoning	5 (7%)	25 (37%)	38 (56%)
Legal	19 (31%)	37 (61%)	7 (8%)
Religious	13 (19%)	29 (43%)	26 (38%)

Religiosity was measured by the religious variables and subjected to a repeated measures ANOVA. A self-assessed religiosity measure (2 levels, Religious and Non-Religious), belief in life after death (3 levels, Belief, Neutral, Unbelief), attendance at a place of worship (2 levels, Attendance and Non-Attendance) and affiliation (2 levels, Christian and Non-Christian). None of the repeated measures ANOVAs showed an interaction effect; the only effect was a main effect for component.

A one-way ANOVA between sex and the components were all insignificant and this result was confirmed by an independent *t*-test. The results for age were also not significant. As a consequence the null hypotheses for Hypothesis 1 and 2 were confirmed.

Discussion

The extended list of components indicates the direction of the responses to the focus phrases (see Tables 9-2 and 9-3) and the components (see Tables 9-9 and 9-10). The pattern which emerges confirms previous results.

Relationships is in an agree direction for all the component focus phrases and the component in both modes indicating that few people disagree. This is also true for Guilt Reduction although the focus phrase *set free from guilt* has a high percentage of neutral responses. Thus Relationships and Guilt Reduction are clearly important for forgiveness.

New Beginning focus phrases are in an agree direction with the exception of as *if it never happened* which has a high percentage of disagree responses in both modes. The overall effect of the focus phrase is to push the component into the neutral category.

Participants make a greater distinction between the focus phrases in the Healing component compared to other components. *Feeling better about yourself* has a high agreement in the forgiven mode but although the direction is to agree in the forgiver mode the neutral responses are also high. The other two focus phrases are split between agree and neutral responses. The effect on the component is to place it in the neutral category in both modes. Perhaps healing is a component which is sensitive to the demands of a particular role. As the offender has experienced less damage to their self-esteem than the victim has the effect of forgiveness may be to make the offender feel better about themselves. Ceasing to feel hurt from the wounds of a transgression may be a long term process for both parties which they desire but are not sure of attaining, hence agree or neutral responses.

The three Legal focus phrases had the highest percentage of neutral responses in both modes. However, the agree responses are higher than the disagree ones, suggesting that *amnesty* and *acquit* are positively understood as part of forgiveness while *remit the penalty of* is firmly neutral. People are aware of waiving a right to some form of compensation or restitution. However, it is possible that individuals are reticent about pushing this right (which would have resulted in a high percentage of disagree responses).

Two of the three Religious focus phrases receive a high percentage of disagree responses while the third (*we must forgive our enemies...*) had marginally higher agree responses than disagree. The overall component direction was negative for the forgiver and neutral for the forgiven. Unlike the Legal component where people seem to “hedge their bets” the Religious component is clearly rejected in both modes.

The problem in interpreting any correlation matrix is identifying a benchmark for a *high* correlation. According to Greene and D'Oliveira (1999) a reasonably high correlation is “0.6 or better” (p. 78). While Cohen and Holliday (1982) provide a very useful guide to interpreting the meaning of *r*. They suggest 0.40 to 0.69 is a modest correlation, 0.70 to 0.89 a high correlation, and 0.90 to 1.00 a very high correlation (p. 93).

Turning to the correlations between the components (see Tables 9-5 and 9-6) two interesting findings emerge. First, the components Relationships, New Beginning, Guilt Reduction and Healing have modest correlations ranging from 0.33 to 0.52. Thus they seem to form a cluster of components. It is possible that they represent components, which are always present, when a person accesses their schema for forgiveness. The other group of components, Legal, Religious and Condoning do not correlate with each other to any great extent (Table 9-8) nor with the first cluster (Table 9-7), with the exception of Legal and Guilt Reduction.



It is possible that these are more peripheral in importance. In this study all the components are regarded as having equal weight this may not be the case in the real world. In addition, the salience or importance of a component may vary as it is influenced by more transitory factors such as time since the transgression, the perceived state of the relationship, and cultural norms etc.

The second finding is the difference between the modes, which only occurs for the Religious component. In the forgiver mode there are significant correlations with Relationships (.28,  $p < .05$ ), New Beginning (.39,  $p < .01$ ), Guilt Reduction (.32,  $p < .01$ ), Condoning (.24  $p < .05$ ), and Legal (.31  $p < .05$ ). The first point of interest is the complexity of the forgiver mode compared to the forgiven where there is only one significant correlation with Relationships (.30  $p < .05$ ). One explanation may be the traditional emphasis placed by Christianity on the role of the forgiver, whether it is God or a person offering forgiveness. It is the forgiver who faces the cognitive, affective and behavioural challenges while the forgiven is often portrayed as being fairly passive in the forgiveness process. In the literature forgiveness is nearly always referenced to the person forgiving. Tracy (1999) reviewed the complexity of the Christian teaching of forgiveness, "The biblical doctrine of forgiveness is surprisingly complex, a fact which escapes the notice of many Christian leaders." (p. 221). He condemned the church and religious people for putting pressure on victims of abuse to forgive their abusers too quickly. Bearing in mind the negative response to the Religious focus phrases perhaps there is a resistance to the moral pressure from religion to forgive, both by non-religious and religious people.

The findings of this study and previous studies suggest that forgiveness is fairly consistently understood by this sample across gender and religiosity. The differences that occur across mode may be best explained by responses to individual focus phrases e.g., *as if it never happened* which may be more appropriate in one mode but not the other. However, the Religious component does appear to behave differently across mode.

The first two studies investigated the participant's abstract concept of forgiveness. However, it was felt that in most decisions to forgive the individual would be personally involved in the situation. As a consequence, in this study respondents were asked to focus on a personal experience of forgiveness in both modes. In this way the emotions associated with the forgiveness event would also be accessed along with the cognitive or knowledge structure of the concept. Thus their responses to the focus phrases would be based on their cognitive representation of the concept plus any affect associated with the recalled event.



In this way it was hoped that the event schema would help individuals to make responses closer to their real-life experience.

By including three categories (personal, relative/friend, fictional character) it was felt that the majority of respondents would be able to think of a concrete event for which forgiveness had offered, or received. In fact, over 80% of respondents recalled a personal experience in both modes (FR, 88.9%; FN, 81.9%), indicating that forgiveness, at least for this sample, was part of their social experience. However, details of the event recalled were not requested and it was realised that this omission would need to be addressed in a subsequent study.

First, no information was asked about the severity of the transgression or a description of the type of transgression. It is possible that severity of outcome, along with other variables such as perceived responsibility, time elapsed since the event, would affect responses to the focus phrases. Also, the more severe the transgression, and the greater the perceived responsibility for the outcome the more extreme may be the participants' responses. In addition, the closeness of the relationship might also affect choice of components. Only a very small percentage of individuals could not recall an event in any of the three categories (FR 1.4%; FN 1.4%).

It would have been useful to have had a control group against which to compare the responses to the focus phrases in order to determine if the inclusion of an event schema affected the responses of participants. However, at the time it was thought that a comparison could be made between Study 2 and Study 3. But because other changes were made to the instrument for Study 3 this comparison would have been of limited value.

Another limitation of this study is that the sample size is too small to conduct a factor analysis. However, with a complete list of components a factor analysis would provide a means of establishing the number of factor components, whether these are the same in both modes, and whether the focus phrases are appropriately assigned to component. As a consequence, the next step is to factor analyse the measure using a much larger sample.

### Conclusion

To summarise, the inclusion of the three additional components (Healing, Relationships, and Legal) has now established a comprehensive list of components together with their target focus phrases. However, it is not claimed that this is a final group of components and



focus phrases. Other components might be identified as a result of further research, or the present components modified e.g., the Religious component if applied to other world religions.

This study has identified a relationship between the seven components. Four components (Relationships, New Beginning, Guilt Reduction, and Healing) appear to cluster together to form a group. While the other three components (Condoning, Religious, and Legal) form a periphery group, which does not correlate significantly, either within the group, or with the core group.

It is possible that the core group could be identified with the interpersonal aspects of forgiveness, which may be the common experience of people regardless of creed or culture. While the periphery group might reflect specific aspects of the religious or cultural factors peculiar to a given society. If this finding is replicated in future studies this may offer one reason to account for the lack of significant findings for religious belief. Rather than exerting a global influence the influence of religious factors may be more limited and specific.

The only component which shows a different profile across mode is the Religious one. Even though this is not a particularly religious sample the forgiver mode for the Religious component has correlations with all the other components except Healing. While in the forgiven mode there is only one correlation (Relationships). It would appear that for this sample at least a greater distinction is made between the modes when religion is involved, even though generally the religious focus phrases received disagree responses.

The next stage is to establish the components using factor analysis.

## CHAPTER 10

### A FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE FORGIVENESS SCALE

*Forgiveness is best understood as a complex, multifactorial construct.*

(Gorsuch & Hao, 1993, p. 345)

Gorsuch and Hao (1993) identified the need for studies to explore the content of the construct of forgiveness. They suggested three reasons why establishing the “factors that constitute the concept of forgiveness” (p. 333) was important. First, forgiveness was a peripheral rather than a core variable in empirical studies (Weiner et al. 1991). Second, that forgiveness was “defined superficially” and simplistically. This is the case in the most recent studies (Vitz & Mango, 1997, giving up resentment and claims for restitution; Ferch, 1998, follows Thompson, 1996, “cease to feel angry or resentful...”). Tracy (1999) constructed his understanding of forgiveness around three types of biblical forgiveness: judicial, psychological, and relational. However each of these defines forgiveness in terms of its process i.e., “letting go”, replacing negative with positive feelings, confession and reconciliation.

Finally, the question of dimensionality, that is “unidimensional versus multidimensional” has not been empirically established. Gorsuch and Hao (1993) suggested that Wade’s (1987) factor analysis which found nine primary factors supports the view that, “Forgiveness could be considered a single construct, but more accurately, it seems to have many components.” (p. 334). Enright and Coyle (1998) also based their understanding of forgiveness on the abandoning of resentment and retaliation combined with mercy. However, they also stated that “...we presume that forgiveness has certain



essential components, but each participant will experience these components in unique ways.” (p. 155). They did not elaborate as to the nature and content of these *components*.

The view of forgiveness as a construct with many components is the one adopted by this thesis. However, there is the problem in forgiveness literature of using the same word to mean different things, or different terminology with the same meaning e.g. Enright’s *units* and North’s *stages*. Enright and Coyle (1998, p. 143) state that the purpose of the process model was to avoid “reductionism and oversimplification”. The components aim to encompass all the factors identified in the literature and thus avoid reductionism without resorting to basing a complex construct on a particular response e.g., giving up resentment, dealing with anger, or holding a grudge.

### Factor Analysis in Forgiveness Research: A Brief Overview of Previous Studies

The use of factor analysis in forgiveness research is concerned with the development of scales to measure forgiveness. Wade (1989) used her earlier research (Wade, 1987) to develop a scale measuring forgiveness on three dimensions, cognitive, affective, and behavioural, from the results she suggested one general factor and nine primary factors (four cognitive: Revenge, Freedom from Obsession, Affirmation and Victimization; one affective: Positive v. Negative Feelings; and four behavioural: Avoidance, Movement Toward God, Conciliation, and Holding a Grudge). This led her to suggest that forgiveness was a construct which included different components. The view of forgiveness as encompassing attitudinal dimensions has been very influential in forgiveness research, it seems to appeal to common sense and investigators assume it is more easily identifiable and measurable.

Gorsuch and Hao (1993) in their study of forgiveness and religious variables were concerned with the question of whether forgiveness was a unidimensional or a multidimensional construct in its relationship to religious variables. A Gallup poll questionnaire was administered to over 1000 participants. They factor analysed the results and reported four primary factors: Forgiving Motive, Religious Response, Forgiving Pro-Action, and Hostility which suggested a multidimensional construct. A single higher-order General Forgiveness factor was identified but the authors regarded it as inferior to a multidimensional approach. They stated, “A multidimensional approach to forgiveness seems to provide more scientific utility, especially in studying religious variables. However, the extent to which this utility extends to other, non-religious dependent



variables must be tested.” (Gorsuch, 1984). Also, “From empirical and conceptual standpoints, then, it seems more accurate to broaden an understanding of forgiveness to incorporate multiple dimensions.” (Gorsuch & Hao, 1993, p. 343). They noted that the Forgiving Motive had the “strongest loading” on “overlooking” (-.63) but commented that the negative indicated that respondents did not regard it as part of forgiveness. Rather, the underlying motive has more to do with feeling better about oneself (both victim and transgressor), healing a relationship and a person’s religious or personality motivation. The Forgiving Pro-Action factor had highest loadings on deliberate actions.

The Religious Response factor, according to Gorsuch and Hao (1993), “is consistent with Wade’s (1989) behavioral factor ‘Movement Toward God.’” Those individuals who engage in religious activities e.g., prayer also “engage in interpersonal forgiving behaviors.” However, the relationship between forgiveness and the religious variable can be viewed as either complex or ambiguous. DiBlasio and Benda (1991) in their study of practitioners use of forgiveness claimed that although religious belief made therapists more “receptive” to forgiveness, religious and nonreligious therapists were equally likely to use forgiveness therapies. Gorsuch and Hao’s Personal Religiousness factor correlated with all four of their primary forgiveness factors, which led them to comment that “the more overall religious one is, the more forgiving one reports.” (p. 345). They rejected Batson and Ventis’ (1982) explanation that this was because of a tendency to answer in a socially acceptable way. However, reported willingness to choose a forgiveness response may not necessarily match actual behaviour. In other words, religious beliefs may exert a global rather than a specific influence. Thoresen, Luskin, and Harris (1998) suggested that specific spiritual and religious factors needed to be measured at “baseline” using a repeated-measures design. In other words, a “one size fits all” approach may not reveal important differences in understanding the construct i.e., between world religions, between denominations, between committed and uncommitted, between secular and religious.

Gorsuch and Hao’s final factor, Hostility is claimed to confirm Wade’s (1989) cognitive Revenge factor. Thus certain of Wade’s (1989) findings are confirmed by the Gorsuch and Hao (1993) study i.e., the Movement Toward God/ Religious Response factor, and the cognitive Revenge/ Hostility factor.

The two studies used factor analysis to clarify the unidimensional versus multidimensional nature of the construct and to identify specific components. The Wade (1989) study approached the construct using an attitudinal perspective while Gorsuch and



Hao (1993) used a religious context. However, in both studies no distinction was made between the *content* of the construct and the actual *process* of forgiveness. In their factor analysis both these aspects are included.

To date many definitions of forgiveness are determined by the particular perspective of the researcher. Enright, Freedman and Rique (1998, p. 51) mentioned the focus of intrapersonal benefits in self-help literature; forgiveness being the result of a faulty perception (Ellis & Dryden, 1987); and an overly inclusive forgiveness which generalises the construct to one's bodily imperfections (Casarjian, 1992). Enright and Coyle (1998) commented that in developing their process model of forgiveness they specifically wished to avoid "reductionism and oversimplification" (p. 143). In this study the forgiveness measure is referred to as the Scobie Forgiveness Scale (SFS). The scale includes items which are representative of theology, philosophy, and psychotherapy and should therefore avoid the criticism of simplicity or reductionism.

From the review above the important points can be outlined as follows:

- Forgiveness is empirically defined in unidimensional terms e.g., giving up resentment.
- The main thrust of research is on the process of forgiving and less attention is paid to the content of the construct.
- The main emphasis of studies is on the forgiver mode, with little attention paid to the forgiven mode.
- The diverse theoretical origins of forgiveness are not incorporated into an understanding of the content of forgiveness. Often one particular area is emphasised to the exclusion of others e.g., the theological (Christian) origin.
- Items on forgiveness scales could also be measuring other factors e.g., pain.

Study 3 identified 7 main components in the forgiveness literature and used three focus phrases to express and represent each component. The research then confirmed empirically that each group of three focus phrases, with a few exceptions, were correlated and distinct from the other focus phrases. However, it is possible that people may share a common understanding of focus phrases but there may also be specific focus phrases where there are differences in interpretation. Therefore, it was decided to subject the focus phrases to factor analysis. Although technically this is an exploratory factor analysis it is anticipated that the factors discovered will be similar to the components identified earlier.

### Self-esteem, locus of control, and attachment

A question, which the study also wished to investigate, was whether particular personality variables also impacted on an individual's understanding of forgiveness. In other words, the approach had been cognitive, and the study tried to address this possible imbalance by including measures of self-esteem, locus of control, and attachment. Thus this was an exploratory investigation.

Coopersmith (1967) suggested that self-esteem was the degree to which a person regarded himself or herself "to be capable, significant, successful and worthy". The way a person reacts to their image of themselves involves evaluative, emotional, and behavioural factors (Wells, 1976). Battle (1988) claims that once an individual's perception of their self-worth is established it is stable and resistant to change. Attribution theory and research has investigated how self-esteem is a factor in social relationships. Thus the kind of attributions a person makes for the cause of a transgression will affect both their cognitions and behavioural responses to the transgressor (Morrow, 1991). Those individuals who consistently make internal attributions in the response to negative acts have low self-esteem. This is likely to be the case for victims of abuse. Trainer (1981) found a correlation between extrinsic forgivers, that is individuals who forgave because of their role, and low self-esteem.

Secondly, locus of control seemed to be closely allied to self-esteem. Those individuals who explained negative events as the result of dispositional factors e.g., ability over which they had no control were more likely to have low self-esteem. A pessimistic attributional style has implications for a person's health (Furnham and Steele, 1993).

Applied to an understanding of forgiveness: a person who adopts a pessimistic attributional style; who perceives negative events as resulting from external forces over which they have no control; who has a low self-esteem, resulting from feelings of inadequacy and depression, may also have a negative understanding of forgiveness. To forgive one has to re-establish self-esteem and take control of the situation.

Finally, attachment theory has had a great influence since Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) wrote his three volumes exploring the process of attachment, separation, and loss. Bowlby (1979) claimed that attachment behaviour characterised "individuals from the cradle to the grave" (p. 129). Hazan and Shaver (1987) claimed that attachment theory provided a framework to explain how healthy and unhealthy love "originate as reasonable adaptations to specific social circumstances." (p. 511). Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and



Wall (1978) identified three types or styles of attachment, secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant. Bowlby suggested that the behaviour patterns associated with the three styles became central components of personality. In other words, attachment styles affected relationships throughout a person's life.

If attachment was an important factor influencing the way a person responded in social situations it might also be appropriate to investigate whether attachment style affected a person's understanding of forgiveness. In other words, individuals who had a secure attachment style respond more positively to forgiveness than those with either an anxious/ambivalent or avoidant style.

The three personality variables would provide a means of investigating an individual's understanding of forgiveness, which included personality as well as cognitions.

## Study 4

### Hypotheses

#### Hypothesis 1.

The factor structure as revealed by the factor analysis will indicate that the construct of forgiveness is multidimensional composed of seven components in each mode, forgiver and forgiven.

#### Hypothesis 2.

The multidimensional components identified by the factor analysis will be the same across modes.

#### Hypothesis 3.

There will be no significant differences for responses to the components of the forgiveness scale (SFS) and the responses to the three personality measurements:

(a) There will be a no significant differences between the responses of high-self esteem and low self-esteem respondents as measured by Battle's (1981) Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories (CF-SEI) scale to the components of forgiveness.

(b) There will be a no significant differences between internals and externals as measured by Rotter's (1966) Internal-External (I-E) scale, and the components of forgiveness.

(c) There will be a significant difference between secure, avoidant, and ambivalent respondents (as measured by responses to the attachment measure) to the components of forgiveness e.g., New Beginning.

## Method

### Participants

Initially only first year psychology students of the University of Glasgow were contacted. The reasoning was that they would still be fresh to questionnaire completion and thus more like the general population. However, in order to increase the sample size it was necessary to extend the contact to students in other years in psychology and also another Faculty. Thus a total of 377 undergraduates completed the questionnaire.

The sample was composed predominantly of psychology students in their first year 257 (81.6%), second year 5 (1.6%%), and third year 23 (7.3%). In addition, 28 (8.9%) were first year students in a theology class, and others 2 (0.6%) from the Social Science Faculty.

In addition, 62 first year psychology students returned incomplete questionnaires which could not be used. This was the reason for approaching non-first year psychology students and the theology students. A total of 540 questionnaires were distributed, 377 (69.8%) were returned, 62 (11.5%) were incomplete, therefore 315 (58.3%) were used in the study.

Few, if any students refused to take the questionnaire getting the questionnaire returned the following week proved to be quite difficult. Some students were absent on the second week, others had forgotten to bring the questionnaire and returned it in week three or four, others failed to return it. These problems reduced the overall return rate to 69.8%.

### Instrument

Four scales, the SFS, Rotter's (1966) Internal-External (I-E) Scale, Battle's (1981) Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (CF-SEI), a measure of attachment (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990, p. 323) with demographic questions formed a booklet. There were four sequences of the scales to avoid order effects.



SFS.

The forgiveness scale (SFS) was the same one used in Study 3 with certain modifications (see Appendix E). Two questions using a 5-point Likert assessed willingness to forgive: “How willing were you to forgive the person?” for the forgiver and “How willing were you to accept the person’s forgiveness for your action?” for the forgiven. The damage severity questions were: “The damage to myself was very severe.” for the forgiver and “The damage my action caused to the other was very severe.” for the forgiven.

The focus phrases were listed after the event section and responses were on a 5-point Likert scale from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”. The same focus phrases were used in both modes. The order of focus phrases was determined using a table of random numbers. Thus the focus phrases were not grouped by component and the participants were unaware of any component structure associated with the focus phrases.

The problems associated with using parametric statistics for attitude scales have already been discussed. One method of trying to address this problem was to allow participants to place their X between the responses. Thus it was possible for a participant to respond with a 3.4 rather than 3. This in effect extended the scale beyond the 1 and 5-point markers. This modification to the responses available to participants had a minor effect. Between 20% and 25% of the participants (74 respondents) used the gaps on at least one occasion in either the forgiver, or forgiven mode.

Demographic questions were included regarding age and sex. There were 5 religiosity measures: religious affiliation, belief in God, belief in an afterlife, attendance at a place of worship, and a self-assessed measure of religiosity. The Cronbach alpha established in a previous study (see Chap. 9, page 10) was .831 for the forgiver scale and .829 for the forgiven scale. For this study Cronbach alpha calculations are .90 for the full scale, .79 for the forgiver and .84 for the forgiven scales.

#### Rotter’s (1966) Internal-External (I-E) Scale.

Rotter developed the scale over several years in respect of his social learning theory. The instrument was designed to measure “generalized expectancies” and consists of a 29-item, forced-choice questionnaire. There are six “filler” items the remaining 23 items are choice between internal and external belief statements. A total score is computed by summing the number of external belief statements receiving agree responses. The maximum score is 23 and the minimum zero.

Robinson and Shaver (1969, p.143-147) give details of the reliability and validity for the scale. For a psychology student population in Ohio State University (200 male and 200 female) internal consistency was  $r = .70$  for both males and females. After one month males,  $r = .60$  ( $N=30$ ); females,  $r = .83$  ( $N = 30$ ), combined,  $r = .72$  ( $N = 60$ ). After two months: males,  $r = .49$  ( $N = 63$ ); females,  $r = .61$  ( $N = 54$ ); combined  $r = .55$  ( $N = 117$ ). Regarding validity the correlations with the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (1964) range from  $-.07$  to  $-.35$ .

The scale has been used with many studies and has the advantage of being relatively short and easy to understand.

#### Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories (CF-SEI) (Battle, 1981).

The CF-SEI was used as a measure of self-esteem, that is, the perception the individual possesses of his/her own worth. The CF-SEI consists of 40 forced-choice questions for three components of self-esteem, namely, general self-esteem, social self-esteem and personal self-esteem. The three components can be investigated as three separate components, or combined to provide a global measure of self-esteem. In addition, there is a lie scale which measures defensiveness. This provides an indication of the respondent's bias toward responding in a socially desirable or conforming manner.

The CF-SEI has a test-retest correlation of  $.81$  and is suitable for adults and adolescents. Like Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale it was initially standardised on male and female psychology students.

#### Measure of attachment (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

The measures were adopted from Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) and Hazan and Shaver (1987) and consisted of descriptions of secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment. The first item described three types relationship with the mother (or female carer/guardian). Participants were asked to circle the description which best described their childhood relationship with their mother or predominant mother-like figure. Participants were then asked to identify the female attachment figure e.g., mother, grandmother etc.

The second item was a repeat of the first for the male attachment figure followed by a question identifying the individual e.g., father, grandfather etc. The third item described three kinds of present day relationships. Participants were instructed to circle the statement which best described their feelings for their present day relationships.



## Statistical analysis

The first step was to establish the appropriateness of the factor model to the 24 focus phrases in the forgiver mode and those in the forgiven mode. Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to confirm that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix. If the significance level is small it is unlikely that the population correlation matrix is an identity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy requires reasonably large values for a good factor analysis.

The second step was to determine the number of factors to be extracted. The method of factor extraction adopted was the one advocated by Kline (1994). He suggested employing four different techniques as a means of cross checking the number of factors to be extracted. The first of these was using eigen values greater than 1 and secondly the subjective scree test both from a principal components analysis. The third technique was to use the maximum likelihood statistic (ML) which required large and adequate samples. Kline (1994) claimed that "the power of its statistical test" gives it an advantage over other methods of condensation so that, "This has made it obligatory, virtually, for statistically minded psychologists..." (p. 50). Whereas principal component explained variance from the sample matrix the maximum likelihood explained the variance in the population correlation matrix as estimated from the sample correlation matrix. The final method was to compare the factor loadings for the number of factors suggested by each of the previous techniques and to determine which extraction gave the best interpretation of the variance, to avoid unnecessary factor splitting or merging.

The third step took account of the most likely possibility arising from the findings of previous studies that the components (factors) would be correlated, and thus an oblique rather than an orthogonal analysis was most appropriate. As a consequence a Direct Oblimin rotation was used. Hakstian (1971) according to Kline (1994) regarded Direct Oblimin as a reliable method for carrying out oblique rotations. Following Kline's (1994) suggestion, the factor structure was used for interpreting factors and the factor pattern for calculating factor scores and factor weightings.

Pearson Product Moment correlations and t-tests for independent samples were carried for the personality variables.

## Procedure

The ten page booklet contained five measures: the SFS; Rotter's (1966) I-E scale; Battle's (1980) CF-SEI; the measure of attachment (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990); and demographic

questions. The order of the scales was varied to avoid order effects. In this way no scale was consistently in one position in the booklet so that boredom or fatigue affected the responses. None of the scales were identified but all of the scales had their individual instructions for completion. A pilot study had not identified any particular problems except the Likert scale for the SFS. As a result it was decided to allow participants to put their x anywhere between .5 and 5.5 to avoid a forced choice response. The questionnaire took on average 30 minutes to complete but completion time varied across students.

In reference to the SFS the focus phrases were presented in a random order and not in component groups. There was nothing in the instructions, or in the administration to encourage participants to associate any of the focus phrases with one another. In other words, 24 independent focus phrases were presented to participants in each mode. This presentation reduced the possible influence on factor extraction of the method originally used to select focus phrases for the SFS.

The experimenter addressed the students waiting in the lecture room and explained that the questionnaire was an investigation into social relationships. Forgiveness was not mentioned so that one measure was not given greater salience than the others. Students were asked to take the questionnaire home and complete it. The following week, before and after the lecture, the questionnaires would be collected. The same procedure continued over a four-week period. At this point it was decided that students who had failed to return a questionnaire were unlikely to do so.

It was felt that at least 300 completed questionnaires would be required to carry out a factor analysis study, therefore additional participants were contacted from third and fourth year psychology classes and permission was granted to contact a theology class. The same procedure above was followed for these participants.

All participants were given a contact name if they wished to talk about the questionnaire, or be given information concerning the results.

## Results

### Demographic statistics

This was a predominantly female sample (98 males 31%; 211 females 67%) 6 participants did not complete the gender question (see Table 10-20a). The majority were under twenty-five years (121, 38%) with 30 between 26-30 (9.5%), and 30 over 30 (9.5%) (see Table 10-20b). The over representation of females reflects the higher percentage of female students studying psychology at the University of Glasgow.



The religious variables revealed that 121 (38%) regarded themselves as very religious or religious, while the majority were non-religious 155 (49.2%) or anti-religious 32 (10%). However, this was still a higher percentage compared with the British population who claimed to be very religious or religious. Religiosity was not reflected in overt behaviour with only 57 (18%) reporting weekly attendance at a place of worship 11 (4%) monthly, 89 (28%) occasionally and 150 (48%) never.

The majority of participants had no religious affiliation 121 (38%), with 81 (26%) Church of Scotland, 59 (19%) Roman Catholic, 8 (3%) Baptist and 39 (12%) other. On the whole it would appear that only a minority of this group would be exposed to religious teaching about forgiveness in a formal setting.

### Factor Analysis of the Forgiver Mode

In the forgiver mode a Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at  $p < .001$  and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .75 which is "middling" (Kaiser, 1974). Using principal components analysis the factor matrix identified 7 factors (eigen values greater than 1) and the subjective scree test identified 7 factors. Examination of factor loadings indicated that legal-type phrases seemed to be split across two factors, thus there was some doubt as to whether a six-factor extraction was more reliable. The maximum likelihood method indicated that at least 8 factors were required to adequately represent the forgiver data, at this point the chi-square statistic ceased to be significant at the .01 level ( $p = .0243$ ).

The consistency of all the methods of factor extraction is a very strong argument supporting 7 factors as the best solution. This was again confirmed by an examination of the factor loadings. Therefore, a 7-factor extraction was clearly the best solution for the analysis of the responses in the forgiver mode.

The following factors with their focus phrases and loadings were identified using the Direct Oblimin principal axis structure matrix. The top five loadings over 0.30 were included as they gave the best interpretation of the factors without losing information. Kline (1994) suggests that factor loadings can be deemed as high if they are greater than 0.6, moderate if they are above 0.3, and "other loadings can be ignored" (p. 6).



Table 10-1.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 1: Healing (FR)

Components	Focus Phrases (FR)	Factor Loading
Healing	<i>no longer hurting</i>	0.73
Healing	<i>broken wounds healed</i>	0.57
Guilt Reduction	<i>set free from guilt</i>	0.59
Other	<i>set free</i>	0.44
Other	<i>cease to feel resentment</i>	0.41

The focus phrases which attracted the largest loadings in the structure matrix were the same in both modes. Factor 1 accounted for 18.1% of variance (15.6% in principal axis factor).

Table 10-2.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 2: Condoning (FR)

Components	Focus Phrases (FR)	Factor Loading
Condoning	<i>ignoring</i>	0.67
Condoning	<i>turning a blind eye</i>	0.64
Condoning	<i>overlooking</i>	0.64
New Beginning	<i>as if it never happened</i>	0.46
Legal	<i>remit the penalty of</i>	0.37

The variables with the highest loadings were the same in both modes. Although the legal element was replaced by *as if it never happened* which has consistently been interpreted as condoning rather than a new beginning in previous studies. Factor 2 accounted for 10.1% of variance (7.8% in principal axis factor).



Table 10-3.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 3: Relationships (FR)

Components	Focus Phrases (FR)	Factor Loading
Relationships	<i>restore a broken relationship</i>	0.84
Relationships	<i>patch up a broken relationship</i>	0.76
Relationships	<i>kiss and make-up</i>	0.37
New Beginning	<i>a new start</i>	0.37

The third factor in the forgiver mode (and the fourth in the forgiven mode) was labelled Relationships. The factor loaded on the three component focus phrases with high loadings on *restore a broken relationship* 0.84 and *patch up a broken relationship* 0.76. In addition, there was a lower loading on *a new start* 0.37. Factor 3 accounted for 6.8% of variance (4.7% in principal axis factor).

Table 10-4.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 4: Religious (FR)

Components	Focus Phrases (FR)	Factor Loading
Religious	<i>God forgives us...</i>	0.68
Religious	<i>we must forgive...</i>	0.65
Religious	<i>love keeps no record...</i>	0.50
New Beginning	<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	0.36
New Beginning	<i>a new start</i>	0.34

The first four focus phrases were the same in both modes. *A new start* only occurred in the forgiver mode. Factor 4 accounted for 6.4% of variance (4.0% in principal axis factor).



Table 10-5.

Loading of Variables on Factor 5: Legal (FR)

Components	Focus Phrases (FR)	Factor Loading
Legal	<i>amnesty</i>	-0.62
Legal	<i>acquit</i>	-0.25
Guilt Reduction	<i>pardon</i>	-0.40
Other	<i>shake hands</i>	-0.33

Factor 5 loaded on three focus phrases (*amnesty* -0.62, *pardon* -0.40, and *shake hands* -0.33). There was a low loading on the component focus phrase *acquit* -0.25. Factor 5 accounted for 5.6% of variance (3.1% in principal axis factor).

Table 10-6.

Loading of Variables on Factor 6: New Beginning (FR)

Components	Focus Phrases (FR)	Factor Loading
Guilt Reduction	<i>bury the hatchet</i>	-0.56
New Beginning	<i>a new start</i>	-0.48
Other	<i>shake hands</i>	-0.47
Relationships	<i>kiss and make-up</i>	-0.45
Healing	<i>feeling better about yourself</i>	-0.44

Factor 6 accounted for 5.0% of variance (2.6% in the principal axis factor). This factor was labelled New Beginning for reasons which will be outlined in the discussion.



Table 10-7.

Loading of Variables on Factor 7: Guilt Reduction (FR)

Components	Focus Phrases (FR)	Factor Loading
Guilt Reduction	<i>pardon</i>	0.39
Guilt Reduction	<i>set free from guilt</i>	0.23
Other	<i>cease to feel...</i>	0.63
Other	<i>set free</i>	0.49
Legal	<i>acquit</i>	0.50
Religious	<i>love keeps no record...</i>	0.34

The highest loading was on *cease to feel resentment* 0.63 followed by *acquit* 0.50. It was difficult to interpret but appeared to focus on release, either of self or other, or both, from the consequences of the transgression. This contrasted with factor 6 where the focus seemed to be towards the future. There was a very low loading on a second Guilt Reduction focus phrase, *set free from guilt* 0.23. Factor 7 accounted for 5.0% of variance (2.4% in the principal axis factor).

Table 10-21 (see Appendix E) summarises the factor loadings (greater than 0.3) of the variables on each of the seven factors.

Factor Analysis of the Forgiven Mode

In the forgiven mode the Bartlett’s test for sphericity was significant at  $p < .001$  and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .81 which is “meritorious” (Kaiser, 1974). Using principal components and eigen values the factor matrix identified 6 or 7 factors, the seventh factor had an eigen value of 1. The subjective scree test suggested 6 or 7 factors; the cut-off point was ambiguous. The maximum likelihood method favoured an 8-factor extraction; the chi-square statistic ceased to be significant at the .01 level. The following factors with their focus phrases and loadings were identified using the Direct Oblimin principal axis structure matrix. As there were four salient loadings i.e., 0.30 or higher for factor 7 it was decided to use a 7-factor extraction. There were two advantages to this decision, it avoided factor merging and enabled a more effective comparison to be made between the forgiver and forgiven mode.

Although the results of the methods of factor extraction were more ambiguous than in the forgiver mode nevertheless the 7-factor solution provided a better



explanation than either the 6 or 8 factor extractions. In addition, this decision for the forgiven mode also provided the highest number of loadings of 0.30 and over of variables on the factors.

Table 10-8.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 1: Healing (FN)

Components	Focus Phrases (FN)	Factor Loading
Healing	<i>no longer hurting</i>	0.84
Healing	<i>broken wound healed</i>	0.56
Healing	<i>feeling better about yourself</i>	0.39
Guilt Reduction	<i>set free from guilt</i>	0.67
Other	<i>set free</i>	0.48
New Beginning	<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	0.42

In Table 10-8 the top 6 loadings have been included as the sixth focus phrase was one of the original focus phrases associated with the Healing component. Factor 1 accounted for 22.8% (20.6% in principal axis factor) of the variance.

Table 10-9.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 2: Condoning (FN)

Components	Focus Phrases (FN)	Factor Loading
Condoning	<i>turning a blind eye</i>	0.74
Condoning	<i>ignoring</i>	0.69
Condoning	<i>overlooking</i>	0.64
New Beginning	<i>as if it never happened</i>	0.43
Legal	<i>remit the penalty of</i>	0.40

Factor 2 accounted for 10.1% (7.9% in principal axis factor) of the variance.



Table 10-10.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 3: Religious (FN)

Components	Focus Phrases (FN)	Factor Loading
Religious	<i>God forgives us...</i>	0.73
Religious	<i>we must forgive...</i>	0.71
Religious	<i>love keeps no record of wrongs</i>	0.32

Factor 3 accounted for 7.4% (5.4% in the principal axis factor) of the total variance.

Table 10-11.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 4: Relationships (FN)

Components	Focus Phrases (FN)	Factor Loading
Relationships	<i>restore a broken relationship</i>	0.80
Relationships	<i>patch up a broken relationship</i>	0.72
Relationships	<i>kiss and make-up</i>	0.52
New Beginning	<i>a new start</i>	0.52
New Beginning	<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	0.40

Factor 4 accounted for 5.8% (3.7% in the principal axis factor) of the total variance.

Table 10-12.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 5: Legal (FN)

Components	Focus Phrases (FN)	Factor Loading
Legal	<i>amnesty</i>	0.59
Legal	<i>remit the penalty</i>	0.39
Legal	<i>acquit</i>	0.32
Guilt Reduction	<i>pardon</i>	0.72
Other	<i>shake hands</i>	0.40

Factor 5 accounted for 5.3% (3.2% in the principal axis) of the total variance.



Table 10-13.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 6: New Beginning (FN)

Components	Focus Phrases (FN)	Factor Loading
New Beginning	<i>a new start</i>	0.53
New Beginning	<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	0.47
New Beginning	<i>as if it never happened</i>	0.43
Guilt Reduction	<i>bury the hatchet</i>	0.67
Healing	<i>feeling better about yourself</i>	0.50
Other	<i>set free</i>	0.47

Six focus phrases are included in Table 10-13 for the same reason as in Factor 1 (FN). Factor 6 accounted for 4.7% (2.6% in the principal axis factor) of the total variance.

Table 10-14.  
Loading of Variables on Factor 7: Guilt Reduction (FN)

Components	Focus Phrases (FN)	Factor Loading
Guilt Reduction	<i>set free from guilt</i>	0.67
Religious	<i>love keeps no record of wrongs</i>	0.64
New Beginning	<i>as if it never happened</i>	0.64
Other	<i>cease to feel resentment</i>	0.46
Other	<i>set free</i>	0.37

Factor 7 accounted for 4.2% (1.9% in the principal axis) of the total variance.

Table 10-22 (see Appendix E) summarises the factor loadings (greater than 0.3) of the variables on each of the seven factors.



Table 10-15.

Percentage of Variance Accounted for in Principal Components (PC) and Principal Axis (PA) for the Forgiver (FR) and the Forgiven (FN) Modes

Factor	PC (FR)	PA (FR)	PC (FN)	PA (FN)
1. Healing	18.1	15.6	22.8	20.6
2. Condoning	10.1	7.8	10.1	7.9
3/4. Relationships	6.8	4.7	5.8	3.7
4/3. Religious	5.6	4.0	7.4	5.4
5. Legal	5.0	3.1	5.3	3.2
6. New Beginning	5.0	2.6	4.7	2.6
7.Guilt Reduction	5.0	2.4	4.2	1.9
Total	57.0	40.2	60.3	45.3

A Higher Order Factor Analysis: Forgiver Mode

A higher order factor analysis, using the intercorrelations between the factors Tables 10-23 (see Appendix E) was undertaken following the same procedure as outlined for extracting factors. The Bartlett test of sphericity was significant at  $p < .0001$  and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .73 which is “middling” (Kaiser, 1974). The scree test and the eigen values greater than 1 suggested a two-factor solution. The maximum likelihood method had to be treated with caution because communality estimates greater than 1.0 were encountered in the iterations and the chi-square statistic failed to reach significance. A principal axis Varimax orthogonal rotation was carried out and two factors were identified, Factor 1 accounted for 35% of the total variance and Factor 2 accounted for 16% of the total variance. Factor 1 had major loadings on Healing 0.63, Guilt Reduction 0.62, Religious 0.52, Relationships 0.50, and in the opposite direction New Beginning -0.50 and a lower loading on Legal -0.33. Factor 2 had its major loading on Condoning .77 and a lower loading on New Beginning -0.45 but in the opposite direction. Factor 1 with loadings on all components except Condoning seemed to be a General Forgiveness factor, while Factor 2 with a major loading only with Condoning seemed to be a continuation of the factor at a higher order level.



Table 10-16.

Higher Order Factor Analysis in the Forgiver Mode

Factor Components	Factor 1	Factor 2
Healing	0.63	0.08
Condoning	0.01	0.77
Religious	0.50	-0.02
Relationships	0.52	0.11
Legal	-0.33	-0.06
New Beginning	-0.50	-0.45
Guilt Reduction	0.62	0.10

Higher Order Factor Analysis: Forgiven Mode

A similar higher order factor analysis, using the intercorrelations between the factors (see Table 10-24) was undertaken following the same procedure as outlined for extracting factors. In the forgiven mode the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .73, “middling” (Kaiser, 1974). The scree test identified three factors and this was confirmed by the maximum likelihood method, the chi-square statistic was significant  $p < .0056$ . A Varimax orthogonal rotation was carried out and the factor matrix indicated loadings on 3 factors. Factor 1 accounted for 41% of the total variance; Factor 2 accounted for 16% of the total variance; and Factor 3 accounted for 14% of the total variance. Factor 1 was a General Forgiveness factor with high loadings on New Beginning -0.73 (in the opposite direction), Healing 0.69, Relationships 0.61, Guilt Reduction -0.59 (in the opposite direction) and a low loading on Legal 0.38. Factor 2 had a high loading on Religious 0.85 and a lower loading on Legal 0.38. The third factor had a major loading on Condoning 0.74 and a minor loading on Legal 0.31. Thus in the forgiven mode there were three factors. Factor 1 was a General Forgiveness factor loading highly on all the components except for Condoning and Religious. Factor 2 was labelled Religious and factor 3 Condoning.



Personality variables

Table 10-17.

Higher Order Factor Analysis in the Forgiven Mode

Factor Components	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Healing	0.69	-0.00	0 .01
Condoning	0.04	0.04	0.74
Religious	0.11	0.85	0.03
Relationships	0.61	0.21	-0.10
Legal	0.38	0.38	0.31
New Beginning	-0.73	-0.11	0.29
Guilt Reduction	-0.59	-0.28	- 0.27

In summary the results of the factor analysis identified 7 factors in the forgiver mode and 7 factors in the forgiven mode. A higher order factor analysis identified two factors in the forgiver mode and three factors in the forgiven mode

Table 10-18.

Percentage of Variance Accounted for in Higher Order Factor Analysis for the Forgiver (FR) and Forgiven (FN) Mode

Factors	PC (FR)	PC (FN)
1. General Forgiveness	35.2	40.9
2/3. Condoning	16.2	14.3
2. Religious	---	16.3
Total	51.4	71.5

Combining the forgiver and forgiven modes (48 variables) produced 13 factors using principal components analysis and 8 factors on the subjective scree test. The maximum likelihood analysis suggests 13 factors. The data matrix was difficult to interpret across the modes. This proved to be an unhelpful exercise consequently each mode was treated separately for factor analytic purposes.



Personality variables

The results of the three personality measures were included to investigate the relationship between these measures and the measure of forgiveness. They were included as an exploratory study to establish if respondents with high/low self-esteem, internal/external locus of control, and three types of attachment responded significantly differently to the forgiveness measure.

Battle’s (1981) Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories (CF-SEI) Scale.

The scale has four sub-scales: general self-esteem, social self-esteem, personal self-esteem, and a lie scale which measure defensiveness.

The sample was divided into high and low self-esteem groups on the basis of one standard deviation from the mean for each sub-scale.

Table 10-25.

High-Low Self-Esteem Group Size

	High Self-Esteem Group		Low Self-Esteem Group	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
General SE	66	21.0	45	14.3
Social SE	125	39.7	49	15.6
Personal SE	69	22.0	84	26.7
Lie Scale	98	31.1	42	13.3
Total SE	56	17.8	48	15.2

Few significant differences between high self-esteem and low self-esteem were found in relation to the factor components (i.e., the focus phrases that made up the component were weighted in terms of the loadings of the phrases on the factor). A *t*-test was carried out for factor components in the forgiver and forgiven mode and all the measures of self-esteem the significant findings are in Table 10-26.



Table 10-26.

The Significant *t*-test Results for Battle’s (1981) C-F SEI and the Factor Components of the SFS

General Self-Esteem Sub-Scale								
Mode	Factor Component	<i>t</i> -value	df	Mean		SD		p value
				High	Low	High	Low	
FR	Guilt Red.	2.74	100	2.62	2.93	0.52	0.59	.01
FN	Healing	2.21	96	2.50	2.83	0.69	0.76	.05
Social Self-Esteem Sub-Scale								
FR	New Beg.	2.08	160	2.55	2.73	0.49	0.49	.05
FN	Healing	2.89	155	2.52	2.87	0.65	0.71	.01
Total Self-Esteem Sub-Scale								
FN	Religious	2.28	92	2.69	3.02	0.71	0.73	.05
FN	Relat'ships	2.21	88	2.14	2.48	0.63	0.83	.05

two-tailed test

A Pearson correlation found a weak correlation between global self-esteem and responses to the Condoning component for females ( $r = 0.15$ ,  $r^2 = 0.0225$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). There were no significant differences between forgiver and forgiven for this component.

For the Guilt Reduction component there were three weak but significant correlations in the forgiver mode: with global self-esteem ( $r = -0.14$ ,  $r^2 = 0.02$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), social self-esteem ( $r = -0.15$ ,  $r^2 = 0.02$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and personal self-esteem ( $r = -0.18$ ,  $r^2 = 0.032$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). While in the forgiven mode only social self-esteem was significant ( $r = 0.13$ ,  $r^2 = 0.016$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The New Beginning component had one significant correlation with self-esteem in the forgiven mode ( $r = -0.15$ ,  $r^2 = 0.023$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

There was a significant correlation between self-esteem and the Religious component in the forgiver mode only ( $r = -.14$ ,  $r^2 = 0.02$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Rotter’s (1966) I-E Scale.

Rotter’s theory proposes that internals and externals respond to reward and punishment and in different ways. A personal hurt might be regarded as a form of punishment. Applying Rotter’s theory to the construct of forgiveness, attributional style might influence an individual’s understanding of forgiveness

The mean scores were: total mean 13.62 (sd = 4.25), males 13.07 (sd = 4.29), and females 13.88 (sd = 4.23). This means of the original sample were: males 8.15 (sd = 3.88), females 8.42 (sd =4.06). The means for both males and females in this study are lower than those of Rotter’s original sample.

The sample was divided into high and low groups on the basis of one standard deviation from the mean for the scale. There were only three significant findings when *t*-tests were conducted between the I-E Scale and the factor components (Table 10-27).

Table 10-27.  
The Significant *t*-test Results for Rotter’s (1966) I-E Scale and the Factor Components of the SFS

Rotter’s (1966) I-E Scale						
Mode	Factor Component	<i>t</i> -value	df	Mean		SD
				High	Low	
FR	Religious	-3.45	106	3.10	2.60	0.65 0.81
FR	Guilt Red.	-2.79	106	2.82	2.51	0.59 0.55
FN	Religious	-2.67	104	3.14	2.63	0.95 0.76

two-tailed test

The SFS and I-E Scale were subjected to a Pearson’s Produce Moment correlational analysis. The components, which were regarded as most likely candidates to be influenced by attributional style, were Condoning, Guilt Reduction, and Religious. However, only the last two were significant and only the Religious component in both modes. The other four components were not significant.

The Attachment Measure (Kirkpatrick and Shaver, 1990; Hazan and Shaver, 1987). The sample was divided into secure and ambivalent groups (the avoidant group contained insufficient numbers to make a statistical analysis meaningful) on the basis of one standard deviation from the mean for the questions relating the female and male attachment figure. The two significant results of a *t*-test are shown in Table 10-28.



Table 10-28.

The Significant *t*-test Results for the Attachment Measure for the Secure and Ambivalent Groups and the Factor Components of the SFS

Mode (Females)	Factor Component	<i>t</i> -value	df	Mean		SD		p val
				Secure	Amb.	Secure	Amb.	
FR	Religious	-2.90	277	2.36	2.23	0.79	0.68	.01
FN	Religious	-2.76	268	2.79	3.24	1.04	1.09	.01

two-tailed test

Discussion

Initial Interpretation of Factors

Identifying the number of factors and labelling them was fairly straightforward in the forgiver mode. The methods used: principal component analysis and eigen value greater than 1, the scree test, maximum likelihood, and principal axis using an oblimin rotation, all indicated a seven factor solution. As would be expected the amount of variance accounted for by the factors decreased with the number of factors extracted.

Forgiver mode.

The first factor loaded on the two Healing component focus phrases *no longer hurting* (0.73) and *broken wounds healed* (0.57) already identified as positive in Chapter 9 Study 3. The other three focus phrases (*set free from guilt* 0.59; *set free* 0.44; *cease to feel resentment* 0.41) suggest that healing involves a release from negative feelings of guilt and resentment which undermine a person’s sense of well-being. This accords with the kind of therapeutic claims, which have been made for forgiveness by therapists and counsellors (Benson, 1992; McDowell, 1986). The linking of guilt with healing in the forgiver mode fits, to some extent, the comment by Baumeister, Exline, and Sommer (1998) that “Guilt does motivate people to express forgiveness” (p. 91). However, it seems that it is the guilt experienced by the victim which is linked with healing and not that experienced by the perpetrator.

The second factor was clearly condoning with high loadings on all three condoning focus phrases ranging from 0.67 to 0.64. In addition, *as if it had never happened* is confirmed as more appropriate to Condoning rather than the New Beginning component.

The fifth focus phrase, *remit the penalty of* (0.37) may carry the negative implication of letting the perpetrator off with its overtones of immorality and injustice. Baumeister, Exline, and Sommer (1998) claim that the distinction between forgiveness and condoning “may be a subtle and imperfect one” and go on to state that “...it is likely that the two overlap substantially and correlate highly.” (p. 96). These results do not support their assertion. Forgiveness and condoning are seen as distinctive in the minds of participants. In fact, condoning consistently receives high disagreement responses across modes, and in the higher order factor analysis it forms a separate factor in each mode. If individuals do blur the distinction between condoning and forgiveness it may be a conscious decision as they weigh up the costs and benefits to themselves and the relationship. For example, a parent may well overlook, ignore, or turn a blind eye to an adult-child’s hurtful behaviour in order to safeguard the relationship. Baumeister’s et al.’s (1998) term “hollow forgiveness” referring to an outward interpersonal act without a changed intrapsychic state might also be viewed as condoning. Similarly Trainer’s (1981) extrinsic forgiveness makes the same distinction between an intrapersonal change and an interpersonal one. Genuine forgiveness (Baumeister et al.’s Total Forgiveness) involves both intra- and interpersonal changes in a person’s attitude towards the offender.

The third factor was labelled Relationships. It includes all the component focus phrases (*restore a broken relationship* 0.84; *patch up a broken relationship* 0.76; *kiss and makeup* 0.37) but also includes a *new start* 0.37. Relationships involves a strong emphasis on starting anew which may only be possible when past hurts are dealt with effectively. Worthington (1998, p. 108) certainly holds that forgiveness is motivational. First, to reduce avoidance and withdrawal from the transgressor and second, if possible, to seek reconciliation. It may be that in certain circumstances the relationship between the dyads is more important than the severity of the transgression in considering whether to forgive. On the other hand, in a family, a damaged relationship may well undermine other relationships. If, as Worthington claims, unforgiveness arises out of fear conditioning, then this negative response may be generalised to other close relationships. Benson (1992) provides anecdotal support of this suggestion.

The fourth factor is clearly religious as all the three component focus phrases receive the highest loadings (*God forgives us, so we must forgive other people* 0.68; *we must forgive our enemies if we ourselves expect forgiveness* 0.65; *love keeps no record of wrongs* 0.50). The New Beginning focus phrases (*wipe the slate clean* 0.36; *a new start* 0.34) can be interpreted as not keeping an account of wrongs but obliterating them (in the



way that Christians claim God forgives them). It would appear that the advantage a forgiveness strategy has over revenge or denial is this ability to provide a way forward, and out of, the effects of the transgression. Forgiveness, with associated concepts of love, care, and concern for others are present in most of the major world religions (Smith, 1989) with varying degrees of emphasis and exclusivity. Usually the target for forgiveness would be a member of the faith. It may be that there are global *religiosity* variables which are shared by most societies. In addition, there may be specific religious or spiritual variables which are peculiar to a specific tradition. In investigating the relationship between an understanding of the construct (its *content*) and the process of forgiveness (how someone is *actually forgiven*) these variables have to be clearly identified and measured. Thoresen, Luskin, and Harris (1998) suggested that Christians may have forgiveness presented within the “practices of Jesus”; while other spiritually-aware people be given a blend of forgiveness from the world’s major religions; and secular/humanitarian individuals have something “couched in a more ‘philosophy of life’ perspective” (p.184). The problem in adopting this approach is that important differences and similarities between religious beliefs concerning an understanding of forgiveness fail to be identified. In addition, how variations in the cognitive representation or schema for forgiveness affect (i) attitudes towards forgiving and (ii) actual forgiving behaviour, are not distinguished.

The fifth factor has a clearly recognisable legalistic quality. The component focus phrases *amnesty* (-0.62) has the highest loading with a low loading on *acquit* (-0.25). The other two focus phrases set the same legalistic tone with *pardon* (-0.40), and the symbolic *shake hands* (-0.33). The impression of the factor is a need to set aside a just and deserved punishment. However, unlike condoning where there is an implied injustice in overlooking a moral transgression, here for forgiveness to progress the transgression has to be dealt with, by pardon, amnesty, shaking hands etc. The implication of these terms is that when certain conditions have been met pardon will be given, amnesty will be declared, or the victim will be willing to shake hands with the offender. A victim unwilling to take any of these steps would be described as “holding a grudge”. Baumeister, Exline, and Sommer (1998) explored the relationship of forgiveness to grudge theory. They propose that “...holding a grudge is the opposite of forgiveness.” (p. 102).

Factors six and seven were more difficult to interpret for two reasons, the range of focus phrases and the small amount of variance accounted for by the factors. This in some way reflects the way the Guilt Reduction and New Beginning components tend to “go together”. However, following the law of parsimony it was decided that the focus phrases

should be interpreted separately. Thus factor 6 was labelled New Beginning and factor 7 Guilt Reduction.

Taking the focus phrases together, the overall impression of factor 6 is starting afresh. The focus phrases *bury the hatchet* (-0.56) and *a new start* (-0.48) give that impression. This picture is further elaborated by *shake hands* (-0.47), *kiss and make up* (-0.45), and *feeling better about yourself* (-.44). It is through a new beginning that a victim can begin to restore their self-esteem and self-image. But this new beginning can only take place when healing has been accomplished, hence the centrality of healing. Baumeister, Exline, and Sommer (1998) assert that concern with self-esteem is a major obstacle to releasing anger. Once self-esteem has been restored then a new phase can begin.

In contrast factor 7 focus phrases appear to be “getting over” or being released from the transgression. Thus the highest weighting is *cease to feel resentment* (0.63) and *acquit* (0.50). In addition, *set free* (0.49) and *pardon* (0.39) may be interpreted in terms of reducing negative feelings including an element of guilt reduction from the focus phrase *pardon* and to a lesser extent *set free from guilt* (0.23). This could be because guilt is not the principle emotion of the forgiver. It would seem that it is the victim’s internal feelings which are involved. Baumeister, Exline, and Sommer (1998) differentiate between the presence of an interpersonal act and an intrapsychic state. They regard Total Forgiveness as including both an intrapsychic state and an interpersonal act. Perhaps this factor focuses more on that intrapsychic state.

It would appear that a seven-factor solution is appropriate in the forgiver mode. The focus phrases, rather like the interpretation of congruent and incongruent traits in Asch’s (1946) studies may be “coloured” by the total context. However, in factor analysis one must recognise the subjective nature of identifying factors and the need to replicate studies in order to confirm factors. Kline (1994) comments, “If sets of primary factors truly are equivalent then their second-order factors (resulting from the correlations between the factors) should be the same. Clearly second-order factors can only be computed where the primary factors are oblique.” (p. 77). This point will be discussed later when second-order factors are discussed.

#### Forgiven mode.

Turning to the forgiven mode Factor 1 was labelled Healing. It includes all the component focus phrases (*no longer hurting* 0.84; *broken wounds healed* 0.56; *feeling better about yourself* 0.39). In both modes freedom from guilt is associated with healing, but for the



forgiver this is linked to giving up resentment (internal) while for the forgiven it has more to do with the effects of the transgression (external).

In both modes healing accounts for the highest amount of variance. Healing may entail all or some of the following: self-healing; release from the guilt of damaging a person (in a communal relationship); release from the guilt of committing a negative and damaging action; the hurt felt and inflicted by the betrayal of an important relationship; and the loss of a valued relationship. It may also be the case that healing is interpreted differently according to mode. Thus, in the forgiver mode the healing may be internal; concerned with recovering from the damage of the transgression, and the sense of loss experienced because of a damaged relationship. While, as one forgiven the healing may be more concerned with restoration of social acceptance (having broken socially acceptable norms of behaviour) by committing a transgression. Gassin (1994) found that her forgiven subjects ranked internal affective experiences, such as joy and relief, as the initial effect of receiving forgiveness (mentioned by 60% of subjects). A factor, which has not been taken into account in this study, is length of time since the transgression. It may be that the initial reaction regardless of mode is internal, but for the forgiver the focus is on release from negative affect and for the forgiven on the relief and joy at receiving forgiveness.

In sum, healing is a core component for both the forgiver and the forgiven, the forgiver is set free (healed) from their resentment, while the perpetrator is able to start afresh with a more positive image of themselves. This may explain why there are health benefits associated with forgiveness (see Gassin, 1994), in fact people *expect* benefits from forgiveness.

The second factor is Condoning which includes all the component focus phrases. The variables match those in the forgiver mode. Unlike some other factors i.e., Healing, this factor would appear to be understood in the same way regardless of the mode of operation. In both roles it is acknowledged that it is the forgiver who has to waive any demand for punishment hence *remit the penalty of*. It would seem that most people are quite certain as to what is, and what is not, genuine forgiveness. However, there are a minority of individuals who perceive condoning as part of forgiveness, perhaps this group needs further investigation.

Factor 4 (FR) and Factor 3 (FN) is clearly Religious with the highest loading on the three component focus phrases. However, in the forgiver mode there is an emphasis on beginning afresh (FR *wipe the slate clean* 0.36; *a new start* 0.34;) which is absent in the



forgiven mode. This certainly ties in with the religious teaching about forgiveness as a fresh start free from negative feelings.

What is interesting is the absence of Religious focus phrases in any factors except Guilt Reduction. In some ways this underlines the way perception of forgiveness may have moved away from a religious context. It may now be seen more as the opposite end of the continuum from revenge rather than a response to a Divine directive. Thus in Rokeach's (1973) value survey he places forgiving along with salvation as the two most distinctively Christian values. This may not be true today. In other words, forgiveness is seen as an interpersonal strategy for dealing with damage in a social context. It is possible that for a general population forgiveness may be more acceptable as an interpersonal strategy than a religious duty.

Factor 3 (FR) and Factor 4 (FN) has loadings on the Relationships focus phrases (*restore a broken relationship*, 0.84 (FR) and .80 (FN); *patch up a broken relationship*, 0.76 (FR) and 0.72 (FN); *kiss and make up*, 0.37 (FR) and 0.52 (FN). In addition, it seems that new beginning is important in both roles, for the victim that the behaviour of the other will change and for the offender that the past will not be continually dragged up (*wipe the slate clean*, 0.40, FN). Gassin (1998) notes that relationship-related outcomes were only cited by 30% of participants as a first outcome of forgiveness. She suggests that while forgiveness is relational, dealing with relationship damage is a later development, as questions concerning the kind of future relationship have to be negotiated.

Factor 5 contains the three Legal focus phrases, *amnesty*, 0.59 (FN); *remit the penalty of*, 0.39 (FN); *acquit*, 0.32 (FN). *Pardon* (0.72) seems to be interpreted in a legal sense and *shake hands* is seen as a formal gesture, a symbolic action signifying a binding agreement. *Remit the penalty of* 0.39 only occurs in the forgiven mode and may reflect the concern of the offender with restitution. The forgiver releases the transgressor from any penalty or punishment, while the forgiven feels they no longer have a price to pay. Thus either *wipe the slate clean* or *remit the penalty of* occurs in each component except Religious and Guilt Reduction in the forgiven mode. It appears that participants do distinguish between the two roles, although much is held in common.

There was a problem in separating factor 6 and factor 7. Factor 6 loads on a range of focus phrases. However, taking the five highest loadings the focus phrases can be interpreted as "starting over again", being able to put the past behind one, and start afresh. Thus factor 6 was labelled New Beginning. Three focus phrases occurred in both modes (*bury the hatchet*, -0.56, FR, 0.67, FN; *a new start*, -0.48, FR, 0.53 FN; *feeling better*



*about yourself*, -0.44, FR; 0.50, FN). However, there appears to be a difference between the modes. A new beginning for the forgiver involves doing something about the relationship (*kiss and make up* -0.45; *shake hands* -0.47) while the forgiven's perspective is on the transgression (*as if it never happened* 0.43; *wipe the slate clean* 0.43).

Factor 7 included an equally wide range of focus phrases and components. However, the main thrust of the combination of variables appears to be overcoming negative feelings (*set free from guilt*, 0.38, FN; *set free*, 0.49, FN; *cease to feel resentment*, 0.50, FN). While the focus in the forgiver mode seems to be towards the transgressor, in the forgiven mode the focus seems to be directed more to self and the transgression. The forgiver seems to be "letting go" while the forgiven expects that no record of the wrong will be kept i.e. no recriminations later (*love keeps no record of wrongs* 0.72, FN; *as if it never happened* 0.56, FN) this is less so in the forgiver mode (*love keeps no record of wrongs* 0.34, FR). Finally, it is only in Factor 7 (FR) that a religious focus phrase occurs outside the Religious factor.

One problem connected with factor analysis is the risk either of extracting trivial factors or the danger of conflating factors and so losing information which might be informative, "for a particular theoretical purpose" (Gorsuch, 1983, p. 170). The approach in this research is to discover the components which comprise the construct of forgiveness. In the forgiver mode the statistical tests all pointed to a seven-factor solution, it was the forgiven mode which was more problematic.

Although the focus phrases had been grouped into seven components it was not envisaged that these would all be identified in a factor analysis. In fact there was evidence to suggest that some components would merge e.g., Guilt Reduction and New Beginning. The options which were considered was a 6 or 8 factor solution. The problem with the 6-factor solution was that factors appeared to be condensed, and the 8-factor solution indicated factor splitting. Thus, it appeared that a 7-factor solution produced the best interpretation for the analysis, it minimised both factor splitting and factor merging. There is a need for further experimentation to establish more conclusively that the construct of forgiveness contains 7 distinctive components, especially in populations where there is a different cultural influence.

One possible explanation for the identification of the same number of components in each mode is that participants have a similar understanding of the construct in both the forgiver and forgiven mode but may apply it differentially.



The factor loadings (Table 10-21 and 10-22) indicate that the majority of focus phrases were linked to the original components identified in Study 3. However, the factor analysis adds empirical support for the initial, more intuitive allocation. In addition, a number of focus phrases seem to be misassigned. For example, *as if it had never happened* is seen as more appropriate for the Condoning component in the forgiver mode (pretending something had not taken place) rather than New Beginning (i.e., God treating the individual as if he/she had not sinned). However, in the forgiven mode the focus phrase loads on both Condoning and New Beginning indicating that perhaps both interpretations may be appropriate under certain conditions.

Another inadequacy revealed by Tables 10-22 and 10-23 is that some focus phrases have a major loading on a number of factors. For example, *a new start*, this suggests the importance of a detailed item analysis and item revision for a more effective measure of the construct of forgiveness. Most of the components (or perhaps more appropriately, factor components) now contain more than three focus phrases, these other phrases provide additional contextual information to confirm and interpret the components similar to the way a key trait is interpreted in a list of traits (Asch, 1946).

The focus of this investigation was not specifically on the construction of a test but was primarily concerned with understanding the conceptual basis of forgiveness. Kline (1994, p. 74) recommends at least 10 subjects per variable and 20 subjects per factor. This would mean for the present investigation a sample size of 240 or 140. The number of subjects in this study was 315, which is well above Kline's recommendations. The subject to factor ratio in this study was 45:1. As an exploratory factor analytic study it is defensible.

The next stage in test construction would be to create a sub-scale fo-scale for each seven factor/components of forgiveness. According to Kline (1993, p.13) each factor scale should use 10 or more items. This would require at least 70 questions and up to 140 for the initial trial. As a consequence, the number of participants required would be of the order 10 x 70 (700) and 10 x 140 (1,400).

Gender differences were not the main focus of the studies. For the effective investigation of gender a large sample of men and a large sample of women would be required. In view of the comparatively small number of participants in these studies gender findings should be interpreted with caution.



Finally, the factor structure was confirmed on different samples in a cross-cultural study (see Chapter 11) and by comparing the SFS with two other measures of forgiveness (Chapter 12).

#### Factors Identified in a Higher Order Factor Analysis: Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

In the forgiver mode two factors were identified. Factor 1 was labelled a General Forgiveness factor with loadings on all components with the exception of Condoning. It appears that the more a person agrees with healing, guilt reduction, relationships and religious the less legalistic an attitude they will have. However, why new beginning should be in a negative direction is more difficult to explain. Perhaps for the forgiver a new beginning is dependent on the other's response to forgiveness, and while forgiveness may be offered starting afresh will be dependent on variables such as: acceptance of forgiveness; willingness to change the offending behaviour; perhaps, some recognition of responsibility, remorse etc. Thus, at least in the initial period a new beginning may be hoped for but might appear more problematic than other components. Factor 2 is clearly a condoning factor, with those who agree with condoning less likely to agree with a new beginning. Presumably if a person condones an immoral act they are back in the same situation and unlikely to be able to effect a new beginning with the other.

In the forgiven mode three factors were identified. The first factor was labelled as a General Forgiveness Factor with high loadings on all the components except Condoning and Religious. Factor 2 was labelled Religious with the highest loading on Religious 0.86, and a lower loading on Legal 0.38. The third factor was had a high loading on Condoning 0.74 with a low loading on Legal 0.31, this was labelled Condoning.

In both modes there is a General Forgiveness factor which incorporates all the components except condoning. Trainer (1981) proposed a *general* forgiveness factor and intrinsic forgiveness factor, which included external evidence of positive behaviour, directed towards the offender, and an internal change in attitudes and feelings towards the offender evidenced in an ending of hostile responses. It is possible that Wade's general forgiveness factor could be described in componential terms as including healing, relationships, religious, and guilt reduction. The greater the agreement with these components the less legalistic. There may be tentative links with Hargrave's (1994) model for the forgiver only which distinguishes between exonerating (two stations of insight and understanding) and forgiving (two stations of giving the opportunity for compensation and the overt act of forgiving). The General Forgiveness factor would apply to exonerating;



agreement with components such as healing, relationships, religious, guilt reduction and new beginning would indicate that the forgiver had gained some “insight into how pain was perpetrated and to establish some form of identification with the victimizer.” (Hargrave & Sells, 1997, p. 44).

Finally, Gorsuch and Hao (1993) identified a General Forgiveness factor and commented that it did not give “as much information as a multifactorial approach. A multidimensional approach to forgiveness seems to provide more scientific utility...” (p. 343). More can be understood about the content of the construct when the factors are kept separate. However, they propose that the single secondary factor suggests “One usually ends up with a gestalt toward another in forgiveness situations.” (p. 343). The suggestion of this thesis is that the intensity with which the components are activated may give a description of which components are particularly salient for an individual for a particular transgression, within a particular dyadic relationship, at a particular time period.

One interesting result is the different direction of guilt reduction in the forgiver mode in comparison with the forgiven. It is possible that this reflects the different perspective of guilt experienced by the victim and perpetrator (Tables 10-16 and 10-17).

Factor 2 in the forgiver mode and factor 3 in the forgiven mode are labelled Condoning. In the forgiver mode there is a negative loading on New Beginning (-0.45) which fits a common sense interpretation. If one condones an act there can be no new beginning; both parties are locked into a destructive cycle of negative behaviour. In the forgiven mode factor 3 has a low loading on Legal. In fact Legal has a similar loading on all three factors in the forgiven mode. Perhaps individuals find that a transgression still requires some form of “rectification”, either an apology, changed behaviour, or an acknowledgement of guilt. Hargrave (1994) in his book *Families and Forgiveness* suggests that forgiveness does require a conciliatory response from the offender before forgiveness can be offered.

Factor 2 in the forgiven mode loads highly on Religious (0.85). The question is why is Religious a separate factor in the forgiven mode? It may be because as a forgiver the religious dimension is part of the shared meaning of the role of a forgiver, especially in the west. There is an injunction in western Christian morality that encourages individuals to forgive, that same injunction does not apply to being forgiven. As a consequence, religious elements would be included within the General Forgiveness factor in the forgiver mode but would be more distinctive, and separate, in the forgiven mode. This could explain why religion comes out as a separate factor in the forgiven mode.



## Factoring the Forgiveness Construct

In claiming that the forgiveness construct is multidimensional two problems arise: The problem of identifying the factors which constitute the construct; finding some theoretical rationale to justify and explain the identification of factors. Anastasi (1982) noted that the procedure adopted by American factor analysts was first to account for the common variance through group factors, and then to identify a general factor as a second-order factor if the data justified the procedure. Conversely, British psychologists began with a general factor to which they attributed the highest percentage of the common variance, and then went on to identify group factors. From these diverse perspectives two distinct procedures for factor analysis emerged.

Anastasi (1966) in her review of factor analysis discussed Spearman's Two-factor theory and Thurstone's Multiple-factor theories. Spearman maintained that all intellectual activities share a single common factor, which he called *g*, or "general factor". In addition, there were specific factors, *s* factors which were less highly correlated than the *g* factor functions. Spearman was aware that the Two-factor theory had to be qualified and proposed intermediary factors, which were not as universal as *g*, nor as specific as the *s* factors.

One of the leading exponents of the second theory, the Multiple-factor theories was Thurstone (1938). He proposed a dozen group factors which he called "primary mental abilities" and claimed that the distinction between general, group, and specific factors was not so basic. Thus, a single general factor might account for the correlations among a variety of tests in a small battery. While in a larger battery of tests the original general factor may emerge as a group factor, common to some but not all the tests.

This controversy between Spearman and Thurstone has a parallel between the problem of whether forgiveness is unidimensional or multidimensional. The factor analysis of the focus phrase items indicated seven factors in the FR mode and 6 or 7 in the FN mode. The largest amount of variance was accounted for by Factor 1 Healing (FR 15.6%; FN 20.6%) and Factor 2 Condoning (FR 7.8%; FN 7.9%) then each factor progressively explains less of the variance. In other words, the components are identifiable but the degree of variance explained suggests that there is overlap and thus they are not discrete entities.

A Spearman type model would suggest a general forgiveness factor and that below this there are specific factors. While the multiple-factor theories rejects the distinction between general, group and specific factors, suggesting that a general factor may emerge as

a higher level factor in a larger battery of tests. Both models would support the idea of a single forgiveness factor. Possibly the Hierarchical theories of Vernon (1960), Burt (1949), Humphreys (1962) and others might be a helpful model (see Table 10-19).

Table 10-19.

Spearman’s g and a General Forgiveness Factor

Spearman’s g	General Forgiveness Factor (schema: positive and negative	
broad factors	Forgiveness	Condoning
specific s	Healing  Relationships  GR-NB  Legal  Religious	Condoning

The General Forgiveness Factor (Spearman’s g) could comprise a schema which the individual holds regarding their understanding of the construct. The specific s factors would be the individual components, which might vary across cultures and between individuals and for different scenarios. The broad factors would be forgiveness and condoning which can operate in either the forgiver or the forgiven mode.

A higher order factor analysis resulted in two factors being identified from the structure matrix in the forgiver mode. One was a general forgiveness factor with loadings on all variables except Condoning and New Beginning. The range was from 0.77 (Legal) to 0.46 (Relationships). The second factor loaded on Condoning (0.75) and New Beginning (0.47). In the forgiven mode there was a Condoning factor and a Religious factor.

There are limitations to the study. The components were identified on the basis of a wide reading of the literature. However, there may have been items which were not identified because they were not available in the literature at the time.

A second limitation is the fact that all the components were assumed to be equally weighted in people’s understanding of the concept of forgiveness. Therefore, the same



number of focus phrases was included in each mode. As a result a spread of factors has been identified. However, this may be an ideal picture and not mirror real-life where the components may vary in their degree of salience and importance for individuals depending on such factors as (1) type of transgression (2) type of relationship (3) time elapsed (4) attitude of offender.

A problem, which faces any researcher using factor analytic techniques, is deciding which method to adopt in determining the number of factors to be extracted. This study followed the statistical procedure outlined by Kline (1994). Seven factor-components were identified in the forgiver mode. However, in the forgiven mode two factor-components, Guilt Reduction and New Beginning were more problematic. Further research is necessary in order to replicate the factors identified by this study.

Finally, it could be said that "...you only get what you put in" (Kline, 1994, p.11). Kline regarded this statement as based on faulty logic. He claimed that it was possible to construct an exploratory analysis, which addressed this criticism by ensuring a comprehensive range of variables. The list of focus phrases was comprehensive and the presentation tried to ensure the participants were not influenced by any ideas of components structure (see p. 10). However it is possible that the number of focus phrases used should be increased in order to better access the component structure of the construct of forgiveness.

Another criticism concerns bloated specifics (Cattell, 1978) that is items which are paraphrases of one another and are thus likely to produce an artificial factor. However, in the current study phrases which have considerable similarity e.g., *patching (patch) up* and *restoring (restore) a broken relationship* receive different responses from participants, also more semantically distinctive focus phrases load on the same factor (see Tables 9-1 to 9-3). Further research would review the wording of the focus phrases in order to address the danger of bloated specifics.

Although this was a larger sample and thus more representative of the student population, further research is necessary in order to determine whether the findings are applicable to the general population. At present there is no clear evidence that students differ from the general population in their understanding of the construct of forgiveness.

## Personality measures

Battle's (1981) Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (CF-SEI).

Finally, a brief review of the personality measures, taking the results of the CF-SEI first. The test was included to investigate the premise that the forgiveness component would be understood differently by high and low-esteem individuals. In fact the results indicated that there were very few differences between these two groups on either the three sub-scales, or the total measure of self-esteem. A number of *t*-tests were conducted between the self-esteem sub-scales and the factor components. Only six of the *t*-tests were significant. In view of the fact that a large number of *t*-tests were conducted then by chance at least three or four tests would be significant. Of the six *t*-tests two were at the .01 level and therefore justify further comment. The higher esteem group in the General Self-Esteem Sub-Scale showed greater agreement with the Guilt Reduction component in the forgiver mode. In the Social Self-Esteem Scale the higher esteem group showed greater agreement with the Healing component for the forgiven mode. A tentative explanation might be that high esteem individuals are more confident in acknowledging the need for healing and a desire for release from feelings of guilt.

Those correlations which are reported explain very little of the variance. One explanation for the lack of significant findings concerns the characteristics of the sample. This was mainly a first year group. The self-esteem of the group as a whole was probably high because they had in some way proved themselves by being accepted by the University of Glasgow. At this point in the session they had not taken any exams where their performance might have undermined their self-esteem. Another investigation with a better balance between high and low self-esteem individuals might be able to reveal differences in the importance or salience of the components of forgiveness. For example, individuals who had suffered a form of abuse (verbal, physical, or emotional) might agree more with condoning, it might be a means of at least maintaining a relationship. A similar argument might be put forward for Guilt Reduction. Low self-esteem is associated with internal attributions and feelings of guilt (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Morrow, 1991) therefore victims of abuse might record greater agreement with the component than high self-esteem individuals.



### Rotter's (1966) Internal-External (I-E) Scale.

The *t*-tests indicated only three significant findings. In the forgiver mode externals disagreed more than internals with the Religious and Guilt Reduction components. This was true in the forgiven mode for the Religious component only. It appears that externals are more rejecting than internals of the Religious component in both modes. Further research is needed to confirm this finding and establish whether externals in general are less likely to adopt positive attitudes to religion, or if the characteristics of this student sample affected the results. Perhaps externals associate religion with making people feel guilty and thus link the two together.

The Attachment Measure (Kirkpatrick and Shaver, 1990; Hazan and Shaver, 1987). The majority of the sample reported a secure attachment with their female attachment figure (238, 75.6%) and their male attachment figure (158, 50.2%), although the numbers were higher for female attachment with the majority citing the mother as the attachment figure (268, 85.1%) compared to the father (249, 79%). The *t*-tests were only significant for the female attachment figure. In both the forgiver and the forgiven mode the secure and ambivalent groups respond differently to the Religious component. In the forgiver mode the ambivalent group agrees more, while in the forgiven mode the ambivalent group disagrees more. Why the responses between the two groups should be reversed in the forgiver and forgiven modes are difficult to explain. Overall, the Religious component seems to be the one which reveals differences between groups. Whether these are real differences requires further research.

### Conclusion

Unlike other factor analytic studies (Wade, 1989; Gorsuch & Hao, 1993) this research is specifically seeking to understand the content of the construct of forgiveness. Seven factor-components were identified in both modes. It would appear that individuals operate an understanding of forgiveness, which is robust across mode. It is possible that personality variables may affect some components more than others e.g., the Religious component. However, the findings from this study are inconclusive.

The study provides empirical support for adopting a componential, multidimensional, view of forgiveness. People view forgiveness as an interpersonal strategy in dyadic relationships which permits both parties healing, acknowledges the

importance of relationships, deals with guilt and looks towards a new beginning. However, individuals may operate the components differently, which accounts for the individual nature of forgiving and the importance of religious and legal aspects. What seems very clear is that most individuals make a clear distinction between forgiveness and condoning.



## CHAPTER 11

### A STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCT OF FORGIVENESS USING A BRITISH, A GREEK, AND A CYPRIOT POPULATION

*But forgiveness is the resolution of all into a kind of comedy, the happiness of reconciliation, the peace of love.* Williams, (1942, p.14).

The literature revealed few cross-cultural studies associated with forgiveness research and none which were concerned with establishing individuals' understanding of the construct. Those that have been undertaken approach the construct from the viewpoint of the forgiver and either the effect of forgiveness on the forgiver or the developmental aspects of forgiveness.

For example, Huang (1990) compared a Chinese population with an American population to study the therapeutic effects of forgiveness on the physiological responses of participants. She looked first at the stage model of forgiveness which was proposed by Enright, Santos, and Al-Mabuk (1989). One finding was that in Chinese society an apology is demanded and some form of compensation, even for those who have reached the higher cognitive stage in understanding forgiveness i.e., intrinsic forgiveness. This goes against the development model which would propose that at the higher stage one would value forgiveness intrinsically and request nothing in return. This kind of demand was not

observed in the American sample, which may indicate a cultural difference in the way apologies, fit the social norms.

In a study by Park and Enright (1997) of Christian adolescents in Korea the emphasis was placed on the process of forgiveness and understanding the construct in moral development terms. The participants were seventh and eighth graders (mean age 13.31) and college students (mean age 21.34). The study continued the work of Al-Mabuk, Enright, and Cardis (1995), Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1994), and Enright, Gassin, & Wu (1992b). Willingness to forgive was determined by adapting two interviews, the Heinz dilemma (Enright & Zell, 1989) based on Kohlberg's moral judgement interview and a friendship dilemma (Selman, 1980) based on interpersonal understanding. The study found a moderate relationship between age and understanding of forgiveness. No gender differences were identified. The authors claimed that an understanding of forgiveness develops from Revengeful to External to Internal Forgiveness with junior high school students in a transitional period between Revengeful and External forgiveness. However, the measure of understanding forgiveness also included forgiving (process) variables. It was not simply measuring the understanding of the construct but also the forgiveness process. It may be that developmental factors, including life experience of damaging events and social competence, affect how a young person goes about forgiving. However, the results do not necessarily provide evidence that their understanding of forgiveness i.e., the construct, is different.

Study 5 investigated the understanding of the construct of forgiveness in three undergraduate populations: the University of Glasgow, the University of Athens, and the University of Cyprus. The aim of the investigation was to discover if there were significant differences in the understanding of the construct between the three cultures. In addition, whether there were significant differences between the profiles of the cultures for the seven components of forgiveness, namely: Healing, Relationships, New Beginning, Guilt Reduction, Condoning, Religious, and Legal.

It is suggested that certain components (core components) of the construct would be held in common across societies and less influenced by cultural norms. For example, Healing, Relationships, New Beginning, and Guilt Release are all aspects of forgiveness which individuals experience regardless of culture. Although account must always be taken of individual differences. In contrast, the Condoning, Religious, and Legal components



(non-core components) may be more affected by factors within society such as the type of justice system, religious belief, and the behavioural mores which prevail.

Condoning is a distinctive component. Unlike the other components the victim might see it as exerting a kind of behaviour control. Possibly the individual is not able because of damage to self-esteem or self respect, to cope with forgiveness. Instead they take the easier path of refusing to admit that hurt has taken place. As a consequence condoning is sometimes referred to as pseudoforgiveness. It is possible that in a culture in which a particular religious tradition is dominant that condoning would be strongly rejected as contrary to religious belief and teaching.

The Religious component is quite complex. While there are claims that forgiveness is part of world religions (Smith, 1989), different religious perspectives within a society may profoundly effect an individual's response to the Religious component. There is also the question of the degree to which an individual is committed to their faith; the committed may value forgiveness as part of pro-social behaviour.

Legal, the third non-core component in some respects contrasts with the Religious component. Both are linked to the moral code operating within a society. The difference between the two is where they stand on the question of justice and mercy. Enright and The Human Development Study Group (1994) made a distinction between justice which "must not go beyond duty" (p. 69) and forgiveness which is a "supererogatory act" which requires nothing from the offender. Justice does not require "self-sacrifice" on the part of those dispensing justice while it does expect that the other will be, or become, moral in future behaviour. In essence the Legal component while remitting the penalty justly merited by the negative behaviour shows mercy in giving pardon. Forgiveness, according to Enright et al. makes no conditions, they agreed with North's (1987) comment, "One might even say that forgiveness is an unconditional response to the wrongdoer, for there is something unforgiving in the demand for a guarantee." (p. 505). Thus in a society which is at least publicly homogeneous in religious tradition there may well be a rejection of a legalistic approach to forgiveness in favour of a more overtly religious one.

The majority of Greeks and Cypriots would claim to be members of the Greek Orthodox Church. The teaching of the Church, its dogma, festivals, religious rites i.e. baptism, weddings, and funerals, exert a great deal of influence on the members of the society both within and peripheral to the Church. Thus, the Religious and Legal components will be affected by the role religion plays in their society. Greeks and Cypriots



because they share a common allegiance to the Greek Orthodox Church should respond in a similar way to the forgiveness measure.

The perceived salience of Christianity in a culture may exert an influence on the individual's willingness to forgive. Christians are called upon to forgive those who offend against them, even enemies. Thus in an overtly Christian society like Greece and Cyprus there may be more pressure to consider the forgiveness option.

In contrast, secular societies such as Britain will not regard religion as impinging on social relationships. In times of extreme distress e.g., an accident or diagnosis of cancer, people may turn to religion for succour. Therefore, the profile of the core components such as Healing, Relationships, New Beginning, and Guilt Release should be similar across all three cultures. Differences should occur in responses to items involving Condoning, Religious and Legal. In other words, religion does play a part in forgiveness but only where religion itself is accepted, and there is a general commitment in terms of attendance, even if only occasionally.

In this respect, Greece and Cyprus may be characteristic of a religious "Christian" country. While Britain would be described as a more secular society. However, while there is a marked lack of church attendance, (the UK Christian Handbook: Religious Trends No 1, reports that about 15% of the adult population in Scotland attend church and around 10% in England) there still remains a widespread belief in God in the general British population as evidenced in previous studies (Study 2, 51% believed in God). The fact that all three countries, Britain, Greece, and Cyprus trace their theological roots back to the Judeo-Christian tradition could explain any similarities in their responses based on this common worldview.

The original questionnaire was in English and was translated into Greek for administration in Greece and Cyprus. Language is an integral part of culture; it is one of the channels by which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. In using language Hayes (1994) commented, "we don't just de-code words or sentences in isolation: we apply the knowledge of the world that we already have, to make sense of the information." (p. 117). The original focus phrases were taken from an extensive review of forgiveness literature which has previously been discussed. Care was taken in compiling the focus phrases to ensure that they represented all the ideas associated with forgiveness in the literature, both symbolic and active. As Hayes (1994) pointed out "the links between language and thinking are many and deep" (p. 119). Language can both influence how an



individual interprets the information and how they incorporate it into their existing schema. Language has a “powerful influence” on thought. There are always problems of interpretation when a scale is translated from one language into another. For example, the MMPI is available in 125 translations but Lonner (1990, p. 69) noted various reasons why it should be treated with caution in cross-cultural studies including the limitation of the original sample. It is “western” and there is no “theory” guiding its cross-cultural use.

Finally, it should be noted that Cypriot society has been influenced by both Greek and British culture. The Greek culture has always played a significant part in its language and customs. While for nearly 100 years, before its independence in 1974, Cyprus was part of the British Empire. As a consequence, Cypriots may respond mid-way between the responses of the British and Greek groups for those components where culture has a significant influence.

To date there has been no significant gender differences identified in forgiveness literature (Park & Enright, 1997). This is a surprising finding, one would have hypothesised that women (nurturing, less dominant) would have had a different view of forgiveness (Droll, 1984). Apparently this has not been the case either in the forgiver or the forgiven mode in the studies considered so far in this thesis. If forgiveness is a universal construct with a functional role in interpersonal relations perhaps no differences between men and women should not be expected. The erosion of traditional sex stereotypes in the west may further reduce differences in the perception of transgressions between men and women and how they should react to them. However, it is possible that in Greek and Cypriot society, both of which are perceived as more patriarchal and protective of their womenfolk than the British culture, gender differences might emerge.

Finally, there is always the danger of a false consensus effect, that one’s own society is the norm. Cross-cultural studies give the chance to compare the known and familiar with the unknown and unfamiliar and of comparing the results of one group with another to establish if there are significant cultural differences and the degree to which an understanding of forgiveness is shared and universal.

All the participants were students, and the majority was under twenty five years of age. Therefore, this was an exploratory study and generalisations must be treated with caution. However, if the three populations do respond with a similar understanding of the construct with differences only occurring on responses to the non-core components then some confidence can be placed in the assertion that (1) forgiveness is a universal construct

(2) forgiveness acts as a social facilitator for dealing with interpersonal transgressions and damage. In other words, the shift from emphasising forgiveness as part of religion to emphasising its role as an alternative interpersonal strategy may more accurately reflect its perception and use by society in general.

Conversely, if differences are identified then the role of culture in shaping a society's understanding of the construct may have implications for research. Such a finding would be in line with Moscovici's (1973) social representations theory, which states that society is a powerful medium for transmitting beliefs and attitudes. "Social representations refer to the stock of common knowledge and information which people share in the form of common-sense theories about the social world." (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995, p. 136). The way causality is attributed for a transgression may be as dependent on culture as on individual attributional style. Similarly, people's attitude and understanding of forgiveness may be part of the "stock of common knowledge and information" shared by communities, societies, and nations.

## Study 5

### Hypotheses

#### Ho1.

There will be no difference between the factor structures for the three groups.

#### Ho2.

There will be no significant differences in scores between the core components (Healing, Relationships, New Beginning, Guilt Reduction) for the Greek, Cypriot, and British groups.

#### Ho3.

There will be no significant differences in the scores for the non-core components (Legal, Religious, Condoning) of the Greek, Cypriot, and British groups.



#### Ho4.

There will be no significant gender differences in the scores for the seven components of the three groups.

### Method

#### Participants

The British sample used in Study 4 (Chapter 10) was treated as a standardisation group and compared to a population of Greek and Cypriot students. The Greek and Cypriot sample was chosen as representing a quite different culture to that of Britain while still within the western Christian tradition and therefore sharing a similar historical background in reference to forgiveness.

The British sample was composed of 98 males, 211 females, 6 did not give gender details,  $N = 315$  (for details of these participants see Chapter 10 page 172).

The SFS was administered to students in their final year of teacher training in the University of Cyprus. The questionnaire was given to 262 students of which 47 males and 72 females completed the questionnaire and were included in the analysis. This was a completion rate of 45.4%. No one refused to take a questionnaire and there were no incomplete returns.

The SFS was also given to 250 Greek students in the Department of Primary Education at the University of Athens. There were 38 males and 92 females that completed the questionnaire and were included in the analysis. This was a completion rate of 52%. No one refused to take a questionnaire and there were no incomplete returns. (see Tables 11-18 to 11-22).

#### Instrument

The questionnaire was the same as that used in Study 4. The measure consisted of the 24 focus phrases already identified with some revisions in translation for the Greek and Cypriot groups. The participants were asked to respond to the focus phrases (i) as if they were in the role of forgiver and (ii) one forgiven. Respondents indicated on a five-point Likert scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that the focus phrase represented their understanding of forgiveness. The Cronbach Alpha (derived from Study 4) is an indication of internal reliability, for the full scale it is .90 for the forgiver scale .79 and for the forgiven scale .84.

The Greek population in this study the equivalent Cronbach Alpha values were, full scale .93, forgiver .86, and forgiven .89. For the Cypriot population in this study the equivalent Cronbach Alpha values were, full scale .84, forgiver .89, forgiven .67. It was found that the focus phrase *pardon* in the forgiven mode reduced the reliability, if this item was deleted then the Cronbach Alpha value was increased to .92 and as a consequence the full increased to .95. There is no obvious reason why the Cypriot population should respond differently to *pardon* in the forgiven mode. This does not apply to the Greek or the British samples. Problems with translating the word *pardon* into Greek could not have caused this effect or because the effect was not present in the Greek sample.

For the whole sample (N = 564) the Cronbach Alpha values were as follows: the full-scale .91, forgiver .82, forgiven .87. The effect of the *pardon* focus phrase is not apparent in the whole sample.

Scale length influences the reliability score that is why the Cronbach Alpha value for the full scale is always larger. It also seems, with the one exception of *pardon* in the Cypriot sample that the forgiven mode has a greater internal reliability than the forgiver mode. However, the values indicate a very reliable scale.

#### Translation of the SFS into Greek.

A Professor of Education undertook the translation of the questionnaire at the University of Cyprus. He was also a fluent in English having studied at the University of Glasgow. Detailed discussions took place as each focus phrase was translated to ensure that the individual focus phrases retained their original meaning in terms of the forgiveness construct. The only focus phrase which needed to be changed to be understood clearly was *remit the penalty of* which became *cancel the punishment* in Greek. This latter phrase is probably easier to understand in both English and Greek. The scale used British idioms such as *bury the hatchet*, there was a danger that these phrases would lose their meaning in translation. However, comparable phrases were used by the translator.

On the other hand, previous studies had found that individual focus phrases were open to a different connotation by respondents than that originally envisaged by the compilers. For example, *as if it never happened* was originally regarded as representative of New Beginning however, the British participants generally responded to it as condoning. Thus, it might be expected that cultural differences could emerge, especially in



a cross-cultural study, in the way participants responded to individual focus phrases. Such differences might be helpful in identifying similarities and differences in a particular culture's understanding of the construct.

Given the competence of the translator it was thought that a back translation was unnecessary. However, in retrospect a back translation would have clarified some of the issues but may not have identified particular differences in emphasis, e.g., *patch up a broken relationship* (see comments on pages 226, 227, and 231).

## Procedure

Details of the procedure for the British group are in Chapter 10 (page 175-176). For both the Cypriot and Greek sample the questionnaires were distributed to students attending the translator's classes. Students were asked to return the questionnaires on completion. Distribution by the class lecturer probably explains the willingness of students to accept the questionnaire. Previous discussions with the translator had taken place to ensure that what was said at the point of distribution was the same as that given to the British sample.

## Statistical Analysis

### Factor analysis.

The original intention was to compare the three groups in terms of factor structure but there were insufficient numbers in the Greek and Cypriot groups to do this effectively. Kline (1994, p.73) noted that Guildford (1956) argued for a minimum of 200 participants but Kline himself regarded 100 as a reasonable minimum figure. Turning to the ratio of subjects to variables, Kline (p.74) noted that the claims for ratios varied from 10:1 to 2:1 and he suggested "the bigger the ratios the better". Arrindel and van der Ende (1985) preferred to look at the ratio of subjects to factors, which they suggested should be 20:1. Kline claimed that this is less useful for exploratory factor analysis when the number of factors is unknown.

A preliminary factor analysis revealed a number of trivial factors emerging (only one or two major loadings). Factors were difficult to interpret because of factor merging and splitting. Therefore, it was decided to combine the Cypriot and Greek groups to form one Greek-speaking group ( $n = 249$ ) which satisfied Guildford's (1956) criterion for sample size.

The method of factor analysis adopted was the same as in Study 4 (Chap 10) that is, eigen values, scree test, maximum likelihood analysis and structure evaluation to reduce factor merging or splitting. A Direct Oblimin Principal Axis using the factor structure matrix was used to identify and compare factors in the British and Greek-speaking groups.

#### Repeated measures ANOVA.

Repeated measure ANOVAs with a 3 x 2 x 7 (Group x Mode x Component) design were carried out to analyse the data. There were three groups (British, Greek and Cypriot), two modes (forgiver and forgiven) and seven components (Healing, Relationships, New Beginning, Guilt Reduction, Legal, Religious, and Condoning).

In addition, a MANOVA and a one-ANOVA for the components in each mode and a composite twelve group variable, group x age x religiosity, was conducted.

### Results

Demographic Statistics (see Appendix F, Tables 11-18 to 11-22).

#### Age.

The British sample was the youngest with 52.3% under 20 years old, while 21% of the Greek sample was under 20 and 75.4% between 20-25, the Cypriot sample was similar to the Greek population with 25.2% under 20 years and 73.9% between 20-25.

#### Religion.

On the religious front 39% of the British sample had no religion, 26.3% were Church of Scotland (the established church), and 19.2% were Roman Catholics with 12.7% being in the “other” category. The Greek and Cypriot sample were homogeneous with 93.7% and 99.1% respectively belonging to the Greek Orthodox tradition.

#### Church attendance.

As far as church attendance is concerned the British sample had the highest non-attendance rate (48.9%) compared with the Greek (7.7%) and Cypriot (2.5%) populations. While the Cypriots recorded the highest attendance rates (weekly, 20.2%; monthly, 21.0%) with the Greek population showing a lower attendance (weekly, 10%; monthly, 13.8%). The highest percentage for the British was occasionally (29%) with weekly (18.6% which is higher than the Greek sample) and monthly (3.6%).



Religiosity.

The religiosity measure indicated that the Cypriots regarded themselves as religious (very religious, 3.4%; religious, 69.5%; non-religious, 20.3; anti-religious, 5.1%). The percentage figures for the Greek population were very religious, 8%; religious, 58.5%; non-religious, 28.5%; and anti-religious, 5.4%. In the British sample very religious, 3.2%; religious, 36%; non-religious, 50%; and anti-religious, 10.4%.

Event section

The next section concerned details of a personal experience of forgiveness in the role of forgiver and forgiven. In all three groups the vast majority of participants had experience of forgiving another person (British, 88.8%; Greek, 96.9%; Cypriot, 95.8%). The other categories, relative or friend, fiction and none were small percentages. The same was true of the forgiven mode with the majority having experience of being forgiven (British, 85.8%; Greek, 84.5%; Cypriot, 89.3%

Peer groups had the highest percentage rating for the relationship of the person involved in the transgression, in both modes and in all three groups (see Tables 11-1 and 11-2).

Table 11-1.

Relationship to the Transgressor in the Forgiver Mode

Group	Friend (M)	Friend (F)	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Other
British	25.5%	24.0%	13.5%	8.4%	8.4%	6.5%	13.7%
Greek	34.1%	27.8%	2.4%	3.2%	3.2%	0.8%	28.5%
Cypriot	45.1%	38.9%	1.8%	2.7%	1.8%	2.7%	7.0%

Table 11-2.

Relationship to the Transgressor in the Forgiven Mode

Group	Friend (M)	Friend (F)	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Other
British	20.9%	24.8%	27.6%	5.9%	5.1%	5.5%	10.2%
Greek	22.0%	25.7%	22.0%	7.3%	0.9%	6.4%	15.7%
Cypriot	35.9%	34.8%	8.7%	5.4%	2.2%	4.3%	8.7%



This was probably an artefact of the relatively young age of the sample and the importance of friendships. However it was interesting that family members were involved appreciably less in the Cypriot group compared to the British population where “Mother” was cited as the family person most often involved in forgiving acts (27.6%, FN) compared to a low of 1.8% (FR) for the Cypriot population.

There was no significant difference between the three groups on the willingness to forgive or receive forgiveness. The majority was willing to forgive (British, 46.9%; Greek, 43.2%; Cypriot, 45.6%). Similarly in the forgiven mode the majority of participants were either very willing or willing to receive forgiveness in the British (50.6%; 32.8%), Greek (55.0%; 28.0%) and Cypriot (47.8%; 35.6%) groups.

About a third in each group strongly agreed or agreed that the damage to themselves was severe (British, 9.8%, 32.6%; Greek, 13.5%, 36.5%; Cypriot, 9.9%, 34.8%) in the forgiver mode. In the forgiven mode the figures are comparable (British 10.3%, 26.1%; Greek, 12.8%, 28.4%; Cypriot, 5.4%, 30.4%). When the neutral and disagree/strongly disagree figures are taken on board it looks as if half the sample experienced severe transgressions and half did not.

### Factor Analysis

In the previous chapter (Chapter 10) the components of forgiveness were identified. The loadings of variables on factors in Study 4 (Chapter 10) were used in this study in order to calculate scores on the seven component subscales for the Greek-speaking group. The same procedures used in Chapter 10 for identifying the number of factors to be extracted were adopted in this study. The 24 focus phrases in each mode were analysed separately.

#### Forgiver and forgiven modes.

Bartlett’s test of sphericity indicated values between .75 and .90 for the Greek-speaking and British groups in the both modes. Kline (1994) criteria for factor extraction (eigen value, scree test, maximum likelihood) and the interpretation of the factors extracted, indicated that the preferred option was a 7 factor extraction in both modes (see Appendix F, Tables 11-4 to 11-10, forgiver and Tables 11-11 to 11-17, forgiven).



### Repeated Measures ANOVA: Homogeneity of Variability for the Sample.

The homogeneity of variability test indicated that the variance of the groups was not equal. Looking at the means and standard deviations for all the components across the two modes, the two components that gave cause for concern because of the range of their standard deviations was Relationships in the forgiver mode and Condoning in the forgiven mode. The groups which were identified as having the largest standard deviations were the Relationships component (forgiver) for the British and Cypriot groups, and the Condoning component (forgiven) for the Cypriot group. In the former sixteen outlier subjects who scored high (1) or low (5) were identified and deleted from the data (11 were British and 5 were Cypriots) and eleven subjects who scored high (1) or low (5) in the Cypriot group (forgiven mode for Condoning) were deleted. The final numbers in the groups were, British  $n = 304$ , Greek  $n = 130$ , Cypriots  $n = 103$ ,  $N = 537$ . This procedure permitted a repeated measures ANOVA to be carried out. Everitt (1996) stated that:

the F-test is what is known as robust against departures from normality and homogeneity of variance, particularly when the numbers of observations in each group are equal or approximately equal. The consequence is that departures from normality and homogeneity will not, in general, lead to greatly distorted P-values or, consequently inappropriate conclusions. (p. 55).

A repeated measures ANOVA was carried out after the modifications referred to above. The means and standard deviations for forgiver and forgiven are presented in Table 11-3. The three-factor analysis of variance showed a significant main effect for group,  $F(2, 475) = 6.66, < .001$ ; for mode,  $F(1, 475) = 6.37, p < .05$ ; and for component,  $F(6, 2850) = 179.77, p < .001$ ; no significant interaction effect for mode and group,  $F(1, 475) = .637, p > .05$ ; a significant interaction effect for component and group,  $F(12, 5700) = 12.73, p < .001$ ; and a significant interaction effect between mode, group, and component,  $F(12, 5700) = 53.49, p < .001$ . The results indicate that there is a significant difference between the groups in the way they respond to the components in the two modes.



Table 11-3.

Results of a Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test Showing Significant Differences Between Means for the British, Greek, and Cypriot Groups

Forgiver	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	Between groups <i>p</i> < .05		
Component	British (1)	Greeks (2)	Cypriots (3)	1 x 2	1 x 3	2 x 3
Healing	2.77 (.69)	2.69 (.59)	2.69 (.62)	NS	NS	NS
Condoning	3.60 (.73)	3.55 (.79)	3.19 (.76)	NS	S	S
Relationships	2.32 (.71)	3.03 (.53)	2.89 (.57)	S	S	NS
Religious	2.88 (.75)	2.77 (.69)	2.38 (.76)	NS	S	S
Legal	2.84 (.49)	2.70 (.61)	2.57 (.57)	NS	S	NS
New Begin.	2.65 (.52)	2.59 (.50)	2.46 (.55)	NS	S	NS
Guilt Red.	2.80 (.55)	2.55 (.65)	2.47 (.66)	S	S	NS
Forgiven	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	Between groups <i>p</i> < .05		
Component	British (1)	Greeks (2)	Cypriots (3)	1 x 2	1 x 3	2 x 3
Healing	2.68 (.71)	2.66 (.71)	2.65 (.72)	NS	NS	NS
Condoning	3.43 (.70)	3.46 (.79)	3.16 (.71)	NS	S	S
Relationships	2.27 (.68)	3.02 (.59)	2.95 (.57)	S	S	NS
Religious	2.90(1.05)	2.53 (.96)	2.05 (.93)	S	S	S
Legal	2.78 (.57)	2.51 (.67)	2.45 (.59)	S	S	NS
New Begin.	2.66 (.55)	2.56 (.61)	2.51 (.64)	NS	NS	NS
Guilt Red.	2.99 (.76)	2.75 (.78)	2.52 (.81)	S	S	NS

standard deviations in parenthesis)

\*MANOVA and ANOVA results



A MANOVA analysis indicated there is a significant complex interaction effect between mode, component, group, age, and religiosity. All tests show significance at .001 level, e.g., Pillai’s trace,  $F(24, 1844) 2.1, p < .001$ . As a consequence, it was decided to create a new variable of group (3) x age (2) x religiosity (2) in order to explore the interaction effect further. Table 11-23 gives details of the numbers of participant in each of the twelve groups.

Table 11-23. Numbers in each of the twelve groups

Group	British	Greek	Cypriot
under 20 religious	57	15	21
under 20 non-religious	103	13	9
20+ religious	64	62	65
20+ non-religious	84	40	23

A one-way ANOVA was conducted using the new group variable (Table 11-23) and component. The results indicated that there were significant differences between the groups for the components of Condoning, Relationships, Religious, Legal, and Guilt Reduction in both modes. Table 11-24 gives these results.

Table 11-24. The Significant Results of the one-way ANOVA

Component	Mode	df	F	p-level
Condoning	FR	11, 519	3.21	.001
Relat’ships	FR	11, 525	10.32	.001
Religious	FR	11, 521	12.48	.001
Legal	FR	11, 520	2.80	.001
GR	FR	11, 525	3.41	.001
Condoning	FN	11, 513	2.17	.015
Religious	FN	11, 515	15.13	.001
Rel’ships	FN	11,514	13.87	.001
Legal	FN	11,509	5.54	.001
GR	FN	11, 514	3.76	.001

The results of the Tukey post hoc test from a one-way ANOVA in the Forgiver

Mode.

For the Healing component there were no significant differences in either mode. The main difference for the Condoning component lies between the older Cypriot group (religious and non-religious) who are significantly different from the British under 20 (religious and non-religious), the British 20+ (non-religious) group, and the Greek 20+ (non-religious) group.

For the Relationships component the British under 20 (non-religious) and 20+ groups were significantly different from all four Greek groups. The British under 20 and 20+ (non-religious) groups were significantly different from the Cypriot 20+ (religious and non-religious) groups. There were no significant differences between the Greek and Cypriot groups. The main difference is between the British and the Greeks and Cypriots.

The greatest number of significant differences between the British, Greeks, and Cypriots were found for the Religious component. Differences were found within and across cultural groups.

The British under 20 (religious) group significantly differed from: both the British non-religious groups (under 20, 20+); and both the non-religious Greek groups (under 20, 20+). The British under 20 (non-religious) group significantly differed from both the British religious groups (under 20, 20+); both the Cypriot religious groups (under 20, 20+); and the Greek 20+ (religious) group.

The British under 20 (non-religious) group significantly differed from both religious groups (under 20, 20+) for the British and Cypriot sample, and the Greek 20+ (religious) group.

The British 20+ (religious) group significantly differed from the Greek 20+ (non-religious) group and the British 20+ (non-religious) group from the Greek 20+ (religious) group and both the Cypriot religious groups (under 20, 20+).

There were also significant differences between the Greek and Cypriot groups. However, due to the small numbers in the under 20 (non-religious) groups only the findings for the older groups will be considered. The Greek 20+ (religious) group significantly differed from the Greek (non-religious) group; the Greek 20+ (non-religious) group differed from the Cypriot 20+ (religious) group.

In the Legal component the British non-religious (under 20, 20+) groups significantly differed from the Cypriot 20+ (religious) group.



There were no significant differences for the New Beginning component in either mode.

For the Guilt Reduction component the only significant differences are between the Cypriot 20+ (religious) group and the British groups, 20+ (religious), and the non-religious (under 20, 20+).

#### The results of the one-way ANOVA in the Forgiven Mode.

For the Condoning component there was a significant difference between the Greek 20+ (non-religious) group and the Cypriot (20+) religious group.

There were fewer significant difference for the Religious component. The British under 20 (religious) group was significantly different from both the British under 20 and 20+ (non-religious) groups and also the Greek 20+ (non-religious) group. While the British under 20 (non-religious) group differed from the Greek 20+ (religious) group, the Cypriot religious (under 20, 20+) groups, and the Cypriot 20+ (non-religious) group. The British 20+ (non-religious) group differed from the Greek 20+ (religious) and the Cypriot religious groups (under 20, 20+) and the Cypriot 20+ (non-religious) group.

Finally, the Greek 20+ (religious) group was significantly different from the Greek 20+ (non-religious) group which was in turn significantly different from the Cypriot religious (under 20, 20+) groups.

As in the forgiver mode for Relationships there are no significant differences between the Greek and Cypriot groups. All the four British groups were significantly different from the Greek and Cypriot groups. The exception was the Greek under 20 (religious) group and the Cypriot under 20 (non-religious) group.

For the Legal component the Cypriot under 20 (non-religious) group were significantly different from all the other British, Greek, and Cypriot groups. However, there were only nine subjects in this group so that the finding needs to be treated with caution.

In the Guilt Release component the Cypriot 20+ (religious) group significantly differed from the British under 20 (religious) group and the British (non-religious) groups (under 20, 20+). In addition, the Cypriot under 20 religious group differed from the British 20+ (non-religious) group.

## Gender.

With regards to gender differences the findings in this study support those of other studies in that there were no effects for gender. The only finding of some interest was that females were significantly more willing to forgive. The overall mean for males was 2.82 while that for females was 2.73  $p < .04$ .

## Discussion

### Factor Structure

The first hypothesis concerned the factor structures of the three groups. Seven factors were identified from the factor loadings on the focus phrases for the British and Greek-speaking groups in the forgiver and forgiven modes. However, the Condoning and Legal components were less clearly differentiated in the Greek-speaking groups when compared with the British group. As a consequence these two factors have been named Condoning (1) and Condoning (2) for the Greek-speaking group in Tables 11-5 to 11-8 (FR) and 11-12 to 11-15 (FN). The order of factor extraction was different for the two groups; as a consequence, the amount of variance explained for comparable factors varies.

Healing is the first factor extracted for the British group and accounts for the most variance (FR, 18.1% (PC), 15% (PA); FN, 22.8% (PC), 20.6% (PA)). It is perceived in terms of getting over the hurt and being set free from guilt and resentment (Table 11-4). In the forgiver mode there is an additional emphasis on a new beginning (Table 11-11). The Greek-speaking group's responses to Healing show more differences between mode than those of the British group. The highest loadings in the forgiver mode are for *set free*, *cease to feel resentment* and *feeling better about yourself*. In the forgiven mode the highest loadings are on *set free from suffering*, *no longer hurting*, and *cancel the penalty*. The pattern of loadings is the same in both modes for the British group, however, there is a greater variation between the two modes for the Greek-speaking group suggesting that their view of the forgiver and forgiven may be more differentiated.

For the Greek-speaking group New Beginning is the first factor to be extracted (FR, 29% (PC), 26.9% (PA); 35.1% (PC), 33.3% (PA)). Again, the Greek-speaking group differentiate between the role of forgiver (Table 11-9) and forgiven (Table 11-16) to a



greater extent than the British group. For the Greek-speaking group a new beginning for a forgiver involves getting right with the offender and dealing with the transgression (*pardon, bury the hatchet, amnesty, overlooking, and shake hands*). While being forgiven appears to have intrapsychic implications with high loadings on *set free, cease to feel resentment, and feeling better about yourself*. For the Greek-speaking group a new beginning seems to be something which the forgiver offers to the offender. While the British group seems to see restoring and patching up a relationship as the new beginning for both the forgiver and the forgiven.

In Study 4 two separate factors were identified for the British group labelled *Condoning* and *Legal* (forgiver and forgiven) with general agreement between modes. However, there was not a clear separation of factors for the Greek-speaking group. Factor 2 *Condoning* (Table 11-5, FR; Table 11-12, FN) was split between *Condoning 1* and *Condoning 2*. *Condoning 1* for the forgiver was seen in terms of turning a blind eye which involved cancelling the punishment. However, the unexpected finding was that *patch up a broken relationship* was interpreted as *condoning*. It would appear that the Greek-speaking group interpreted “patch up” as “cover over” (*Condoning*) rather than repair (*Relationships*). Perhaps the Greek-speaking group interpreted the forgiver’s condonation as a false or sham reconciliation. From the offender’s perspective *condoning* means that it is as if the transgression never happened, it is wiped out. *Condoning 2* loaded on *wipe the slate clean, ignoring, and overlooking* and implied no longer hurting. *Condoning 1* may reflect the negative aspects of *condoning* for the forgiver; it is possible that *Condoning 2* represents the perceived positive aspects for the offender. The forgiven mode (Table 11-12) reflects a similar pattern of loading on focus phrases.

In so far as: the factor analysis favoured a 7-factor solution in both modes for both groups; the factors are very similar despite differences in variable loadings on certain focus phrases, the first null hypothesis is rejected. However, the danger of a Type 1 error is acknowledged and further research is necessary to confirm the findings, especially with regards to *condoning*.

### The Effect of Age and Religiosity on the Components of Forgiveness

The Tables 11-20 to 11-24 reveal that the effect of both age and religiosity are different for the three cultural groups. The ANOVA and Tukey tests identify the effect these variables could have on the components of forgiveness. For two components, *Healing* and *New*

Beginning the variables had effect in either the forgiver or forgiven mode. The major influence is on the Religious component in both modes. This is not unexpected because religiosity and the Religious component should be highly correlated. As a consequence, this finding supports the validity of the SFS Religious component.

A surprising result is the influence age/religiosity in both modes on the Relationships component. However, part of this may be related to the different interpretation of the British and Greek-speaking groups of the focus phrase *patch up a broken relationship*. Another possible explanation is the emphasis of Christianity on the importance of relationships in forgiveness.

The influence of age and religiosity on the Legal component is less marked in the forgiver mode the British non-religious groups (under 20, 20+) are different from the Cypriot religious 20+ (religious) group. Whereas, in the forgiven mode the Cypriot under 20 (non-religious) group is distinctive from all other groups. However, this may be an artefact of the small numbers of participants in the group.

The age/religiosity variable seems to exert more influence on the Condoning component in the forgiver mode than in the forgiven. In the forgiver mode there is no distinction between the British and Greek groups, but between the British and Cypriot groups only. In addition, the Greek 20+ (non-religious) group is different from the Cypriot 20+ group (religious and non-religious) in the forgiver mode but only the religious group in the forgiven mode.

Finally, in the Guilt Reduction component the Cypriot 20+ (religious) group shows differences with the British groups 20+ (religious) and under 20 and 20+ (non-religious) in the forgiver mode. Whereas, in the forgiven mode the same applies, except it is the British under 20 (religious) group, rather than the British 20+ (religious) group that is identified. One possible explanation is that religious people have higher levels of guilt and thus would be more likely to agree with guilt reduction focus phrases.

In general terms the core components of Healing and New Beginning are not influenced by the age/religiosity variable. The influence on the other core components, Relationships and Guilt Reduction may be mediated through the influence of religion on feelings of guilt and the importance of relationships.



## Core Components

The second hypothesis concerned the core components (Healing, Relationships, New Beginning and Guilt Reduction) for the Greek, Cypriot and British groups (Table 11-3). There were no significant differences between the means of the three groups for Healing in either mode. However, there was a difference of emphasis, some of the higher loadings for the British group only received a moderate loading from the Greek-speaking group. This group also had moderate loadings on other focus phrases. The differences were less pronounced in the forgiven mode.

The British means for the Relationships component (FR,  $M = 2.32$ ; FN,  $M = 2.27$ ) are significantly different from those of the Greek (FR,  $M = 3.03$ ; FN,  $M = 3.02$ ) and Cypriot groups (FR,  $M = 2.89$ ; FN,  $M = 2.95$ ) both modes  $p < .05$ . Thus the British are more in agreement that the Relationships are part of their understanding of the construct of forgiveness. This could be a reflection of the individualistic perspective, which emphasises dyadic relations, or an artefact of the age of the British sample. However, if it was the latter, as the groups are similar it would have been expected that the Greeks and Cypriots would have responded in a similar to the British group. Part of the difference, however, could be due to the different interpretation of the *patch up...* focus phrase.

The means of the New Beginning component (forgiver mode) are significantly different for the British group ( $M = 2.65$ ) and the Cypriot group ( $M = 2.46$ )  $p < .05$ . Thus the Cypriot group agrees more and the British group agrees less. One distinguishing feature between the two groups is religiosity. Forgiveness would include a new beginning from a Christian perspective. Since the Cypriot group responded as the most religious of the three groups (religious: Cypriots, 69.5%; Greeks, 58.5%; British, 50%) then a tentative explanation might be the effect of religiosity. However, in the forgiven mode there are no significant differences between the means of the three groups.

The means of the Guilt Reduction component are significantly different for the British group (FR,  $M = 2.80$ ; FN,  $M = 2.99$ ) and the Greek group (FR,  $M = 2.55$ ; FN,  $M = 2.75$ ) and the Cypriot group (FR,  $M = 2.47$ ; FN,  $M = 2.52$ )  $p < .05$ . Thus the British responses are close to the neutral response indicating that many participants did not view reducing guilt as part of their understanding of forgiveness. However, the majority of the other two groups do view guilt reduction as part of their understanding of forgiveness. If forgiveness is viewed as a religious construct then it might be expected to involve a greater emphasis on reducing guilt.



The ANOVA results show that Healing and New Beginning are not influenced by the group/age/religiosity variable. But there is an influence for Relationships and Guilt Reduction. The suggestion was that this influence is mediated through the effect of religion on feelings of guilt and an emphasis on the importance of relationships. This discovery emphasises the complex interaction of religion and culture and the possibility that core components may be influenced indirectly by the religious element within the culture.

Out of 24 comparisons, 15 were non-significant and 9 were significant, thus 62.5% of the comparisons are not significantly different. This suggests that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

### Non-Core Components

The third hypothesis concerned the non-core components (Legal, Religious, and Condoning) for the Greek, Cypriot, and British groups. In the forgiver mode there is a significant difference between the means of the Legal component for the British (FR,  $M = 2.84$ ) and Cypriot (FR,  $M = 2.57$ ) groups  $p < .05$ . The British responses are closer to neutral while the Cypriots are closer to an agree response. In the forgiven mode the mean of the British group ( $M = 2.78$ ) is significantly different from both the Greek ( $M = 2.51$ ) and the Cypriot ( $M = 2.45$ ) groups at  $p < .05$ . Thus, in the forgiven mode the Greeks move closer to the Cypriot position. It is not clear whether this also relates to the religious dimension with the idea of a punishment due but foregone.

For the Religious component the means of the Cypriot group (FR,  $M = 2.38$ ; FN,  $M = 2.05$ ) are significantly different from both the Greek group (FR,  $M = 2.77$ ; FN,  $M = 2.53$ ) and the British (FR,  $M = 2.88$ ; FN,  $M = 2.90$ )  $p < .05$ . The Cypriot group are more in agreement with the Religious focus phrases. From the demographic statistics they appeared to be the most strongly religious of the three groups. What is interesting is that in the forgiver mode is that there is a significant difference between all three groups,  $p < .05$ . The British means show the greatest disagreement ( $M = 2.90$ ), the Greeks in the middle ( $M = 2.53$ ) and the Cypriots having the strongest agreement ( $M = 2.05$ ).

In the forgiver mode for the Condoning component there are significant differences between the means of the British ( $M = 3.60$ ) and Cypriot groups ( $M = 3.19$ ) and the Greek ( $M = 3.55$ ) and Cypriot groups ( $M = 3.19$ )  $p < .05$ . Thus the Cypriot group is more neutral in comparison with the British and Greek groups who disagree that condoning is part of their understanding of forgiveness. In the forgiven mode there is no significant difference



between the Greek and British groups. However, the Cypriot group ( $M = 3.16$ ) is significantly different from the British group ( $M = 3.43$ ) and the Greek group ( $M = 3.46$ )  $p < .05$ . The more religious Cypriots are less in disagreement with Condoning than either the British or the Greeks in both modes.

Out of 18 comparisons 6 are non-significant and 12 are significant, that is 66.7% show significant differences which is almost a reversal of the proportion core and non-core results. These findings offer support to rejecting the third null hypothesis. It does appear that there are more differences between the non-core components than the core components, which adds some support to the suggestion that people have a common schema for forgiveness, that is the core components. But that the non-core components will be more open to the influence of cultural variables.

In sum, the picture which emerges is that the component profiles of the Greek group consistently come mid-way between those of the British and Cypriots. The responses of the Greek group are significantly different from those of the British for the Relationships component (both modes). In addition, within mode there is a significant difference in the responses for Guilt Reduction (forgiver). However, in the forgiven mode the Greeks are closer to the Cypriots and are significantly different to the British on the Religious, Legal, and Guilt Reduction components. The greatest difference is between the British and Cypriot groups. In the forgiver mode the only non-significant finding is for Healing. In the forgiven mode Healing and New Beginning are non-significant. The Greeks and Cypriots are significantly different on the same components in both modes, namely, Condoning and Religious.

The distinction between non-core and core components, that is those that are influenced directly by culture, and those that are more resistant to cultural effects, deserves further investigation. The significance of culture may depend on the importance that a community places on its historical roots. It would seem in this particular investigation that the Greek-speaking group, particularly the Cypriots, are more influenced by their cultural norms than the British.

## Gender

As no significant differences were found in respect of gender the fourth null hypothesis is accepted. The most cogent explanation seems to be the fudging of the roles and

expectations of men and women in the west. As old stereotypes are broken down the sexes may react in similar ways to events. Alternatively, it could be that forgiveness is a common interpersonal strategy, which is not influenced by gender. Beer, Sinclair, Healy, and Bourne, Jr. (1995) in their laboratory study on the conflictual action choices in the presence and absence of a peace treaty found “intriguing” gender results. Men made more conflictual action choices in the face an aggressive action in the presence of a peace treaty, while women in the same situation, made less conflictual action choices. The authors suggest that this differential gender reaction to a peace treaty might suggest that males and females activated different schemata related to peace treaties. This hypothesis might then be applied to a range of behaviours including “fear and forgiveness”. However, there is no supporting evidence in this study that the schemata accessed for the construct of forgiveness is different for males and females. If there are significant gender differences they have not yet been identified in any of the published literature. Whether the lack of gender differences is a significant finding, and what significance, if any, it has for forgiveness research is yet to be determined.

### Limitations of the Study

The main limitations of Study 5 concern those associated with the use of factor analysis and the problems of conducting a cross-cultural study.

Reference has already been made to the main objections levelled against factor analysis (Chapter 10.). The purpose of factor analysis is to condense a matrix of correlations, in order to explain and account for the correlations the factors must be interpreted and identified (Kline, 1994). Techniques have been developed to assist in the identification of the number of factors to be extracted and thus reduce the element of subjective, or potential experimenter bias. These techniques have been used in this study, so that the identification of a seven-factor extraction in both modes for the construct of forgiveness may be held with some confidence.

However, one of the main problems is identifying and labelling an extracted factor using the factor loadings. Kline (1994, p. 180) gave 0.3 as a sensible guideline. On this basis it is possible to recognise similarities between the factors extracted in the British and Greek-speaking groups. This is especially the case for the core components (Healing, Relationships, New Beginning, and Guilt Reduction). But there are variations between the factor loadings and the variables which comprise the factors. The difficulty lies in deciding the cut-off point between being able to use the same label for a factor, and when a



completely different factor has been identified. An example of this dilemma is the two types of Condoning identified for the Greek-speaking group. Problems of this kind might be addressed by the use of alternative statistical techniques, which are less dependent on subjective evaluations. However, other techniques have their own limitations (see Kline, 1994, p. 183).

Second, the translation of tests in cross-cultural studies poses considerable problems in ensuring consistency of meaning and common usage. For example, the focus phrase *patch up a broken relationship* was correctly translated into Greek. However, while the British population understands the phrase in terms of repair, the Greek and Cypriot populations understood it as cover over. It may be that there were similar problems with the Condoning and Legal focus phrases which led to the splitting of Condoning for the Greek-speaking group. What has been identified has general implications for use of questionnaire methodology in cross-cultural studies. There is the need to replicate the study to check that the translation of the scale has not substantially altered its meaning. This was a preliminary investigation and certain issues pertinent to cross-cultural studies need to be addressed in subsequent investigations, for example, would a “back” translation be identical to a forward translation? Ellis, Becker, and Kimmel (1993) stated that,

It is well known amongst test developers that the use of a test in a culture other than the one in which it was developed requires evidence of the test's reliability and validity in the new setting and, usually, the development of new cultural norms. (p. 133).

The next stage would be to apply statistical methods based on item response theory to identify whether there are other items that function differently in the British and Greek-speaking cultures. One focus phrase (*patch up a broken relationship*) has already been identified. Length of scale may also affect response tendencies in cultures. For example, Hispanics make more extreme responses than non-Hispanics using a 5-point Likert scale. However, this tendency disappears when a 10-point Likert scale is used (Hui & Triandis, 1989).

Carr, Munro, and Bishop (1995) drew attention to the questionable value of using Likert scaling in non-western cultures. They suggest that Likert scaling is based on the need to create “cognitive consistency”, and that non-western countries may in fact exhibit cognitive “tolerance”. This has implications for cross-cultural forgiveness research. In order to avoid what Carr, Munro, and Bishop call “unintentional ethnocentrism” other

measures such as exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis and scales might be appropriate. This is not a problem with this particular study but would be relevant in any investigation of Asian cultures.

Finally, the range of cultures was restricted. All three cultures could be said to be western, mainly middle class, sharing a common religious heritage (despite Britain being regarded a multi-cultural society). A tribal culture, a rural Muslim community, a society geared towards community co-operation rather than the individual might well indicate different profiles of the components.

A limitation of the study, which is fairly ubiquitous in psychological research, is that the subjects are undergraduates. It is questionable how representative undergraduates are of the general population especially as the lower socio-economic and older age groups are poorly represented in higher education. Their life experience might also have been limited because of their young age.

The problems identified above decrease the chances of finding any similarities between the two groups. As a consequence, the fact that a seven factor structure was found in both populations and that factors did have identifiable similarities does justify in part the claim for a common cognitive representation of the construct of forgiveness. The main findings of the study are:

1. Seven factor-components of forgiveness have been identified in the forgiver and the forgiven modes.
2. The same factor-components operate in both modes.
3. The highest amount of variance for the British sample is explained by Healing while for the Greek-speaking sample it is explained by New Beginning.
4. The Condoning factor-component had to be divided into two factors for the Greek-speaking group. The group appears to make a distinction between reacting to the transgressor and the transgression.
5. The means of the Cypriot group were significantly different from those of the other two groups on the Religious factor-component. While the means of the British were significantly different on the Relationships factor-component from the other two groups.



## Conclusion

The study has shown that the components are relatively stable across cultures. In other words, both Greek-speaking and British participants share a common understanding of forgiveness. However, certain components are sensitive to influences within a culture, such as the religious ethos pervading Cypriot society i.e., the core/non-core distinction. Further cross-cultural research is now needed to compare different religious groups and secular groups in order to more clearly establish the core/non-core distinction. Thus a Greek population could be compared to a Muslim population in Pakistan and a Communist group in mainland China.

There is a growing interest in expanding the use of forgiveness to nations (Shriver, 1995). This could be a result of the new world order with the fall of communism in the USSR (Worthington, 1998). Or, the fact that through the media people are made immediately aware of the horrors of civil war and ethnic cleansing (Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Kosova, and Chechnya). Or, Nelson Mandela's Peace and Reconciliation Commission might have spurred interest in a different political approach to past conflict and present hurt. If forgiveness on a community or international basis is to be achieved it needs to establish how individuals of different faiths, and no faith, understand forgiveness before communities can embark on the painful process of forgiving national and international transgressions. In other words, there are problems in scaling up forgiveness between individuals, dyadic forgiveness and group forgiveness. There is a parallel here in the study of aggression in individuals and group-based violence. Therefore, one goal of future research should be to investigate how individuals understand the concept and identify any subtle shifts in meaning across and possibly within, cultures. In the words of Desmond Tutu "If we don't deal with our past adequately, it will return to haunt us." (Enright and North, 1998, p. xiv).

## CHAPTER 12

### A COMPARISON OF THREE MEASURES OF FORGIVENESS

...we presume that forgiveness has certain essential components, but each participant will experience these components in unique ways.

(Enright and Coyle, 1998, p.155)

Over the past seventeen years there have been various forgiveness measurement scales, each has approached their task from a slightly different vantagepoint. Most have been indebted to previous workers in the field. These scales will be discussed briefly.

#### Trainer (1981)

According to Park and Enright (1997) Trainer's (1981) investigation was the "first empirical research on the psychology of interpersonal forgiveness." (p. 394). For her dissertation Trainer looked at the forgiveness styles of 73 recently divorced or separated participants. She identified four styles, general, intrinsic, role-expected, and expedient forgiveness. Only the first two types displayed the characteristics associated with genuine forgiveness e.g., positive behaviour towards the offender, internal positive feelings, and decreased anger. In addition, participants whose responses fell into these two categories experienced an increased sense of personal power with time, whereas the opposite was the case for expedient and role-expected forgiveness.

Park and Enright (1997) suggested that Trainer's (1981) identification of different types of forgiveness could be viewed within a developmental framework. Thus external and role-related forgiveness are regarded as inferior to intrinsic forgiveness because only the latter involves both internal change (release of negative feelings) and external change (behaviour changes). While role-expected and expedient forgiveness featured internal conflict and either external or no behavioural change. The findings from their study indicated that adolescents' understanding of forgiveness goes from Revengeful to External



forgiveness to the beginnings of Internal forgiveness. Junior High school pupils fall between Revengeful and External and are more susceptible to peer pressure than the older group. College students are External moving toward Internal. No gender differences were found.

McCullough and Worthington (1994) issue a word of warning, which may have implications for using the scale to support the developmental model. They comment, "Trainer's scales, however, are psychometrically weak. Also, her findings are based on retrospective reports, the accuracy of which may be suspect." (p. 4).

#### Wade (1989)

Wade (1989) reviewed the approaches to measuring forgiveness which, prior to Trainer (1981) were on the whole simplistic behavioural measures of forgiveness e.g., Rokeach's value survey, 1973; Story's, 1985 single question, "Are there any of the above acts which you did that you find difficult to forgive yourself?" (p. 38); within Game Theory, as a co-operative response after a competitive one (Horai, Lindskold, Gahagan, & Tedeschi, 1969; Pareek & Banerjee, 1974; Swingle, 1969). Wade identified two weaknesses in Trainer's scale. First the actual number of items in the scales was small and therefore might not have included all the cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of the construct. This criticism can be levelled at later scales. Second, the dimensions were confused in certain items. Again, a common error which Cronbach identified in accuracy research.

Thus Wade set out to develop a scale to measure forgiveness in three stages using cognitive, affective, and behavioural statements. First she began with 451 descriptors of both forgiveness and unforgiveness from a previous study (Wade, 1987) these items were rated by judges and the agreed 242 items were put into subcategorises of forgiveness and unforgiveness. From these, 118 items were analysed and a final scale of 83 items with 9 subscales was developed.

McCullough and Worthington, (1994) regard Wade's (1989) scale as the "most adequate among self-report measures." (p. 18) They used twenty of her items in their investigation of an empathy model of forgiveness.

The advantage of Wade's (1989) scale is the breadth of the items and the comprehensiveness of the scale, which includes all three of the suggested dimensions of forgiveness, affect, cognition and behaviour. As it is a long scale researchers may find it useful to use part of the scale rather than all of it.



Mauger, Freeman, McBride, Perry, Grove, and McKinney, (1992)

Like Wade (1989) and Trainer (1981) this is a self-report measure and its aim was to measure forgiveness of others and forgiveness of self and formed part of an ongoing research project measuring multiple dimensions of behaviour related to personality disorders (Mauger et al., 1985). Despite the authors claim that, "These scales have adequate psychometric properties to justify their use in further research and in clinical practice" (p. 179) they are open to the same criticisms made of Trainer's scale (1981). The scales do not distinguish between cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects of forgiveness. The statements, although claimed to be "empirically based operational definitions of forgiveness" (p. 172-4) are ambiguous e.g., "I often use sarcasm when people deserve it." The forgiveness of self-items could be measuring either guilt, or forgiveness, or both. McCullough and Worthington (1994) regard this scale as receiving limited psychometric support. The use of a forgiveness measure within scales to measure personality disorders may be inappropriate. Such individuals may require some kind of forgiveness therapy or instruction in order that they, and the researchers, may share a common understanding of the concept.

Gorsuch and Hao (1993)

Twenty-five forgiveness responses to four questions were completed by 1000 respondents (chosen by stratified random sampling procedure) as part of a Gallup poll questionnaire. The responses to a transgression were, *get even, hold resentment, overlook, forgive, pray for that person* etc., thus only the role of forgiver was investigated as with all the studies mentioned so far. The researchers were interested in establishing the uni/multidimensional character of forgiveness and its relationship to religious variables.

A second-order General Forgiveness factor was found which Gorsuch and Hao (1993) refer to as a gestalt by which they mean a disposition toward a forgiving or unforgiving approach to others. They prefer a multi-dimensional approach to forgiveness and identify four factors, Forgiving Motive, Religious Response, Forgiving Pro-Action, and Hostility. The first had the strongest loading on "overlook" (-0.63), the negative loading suggests that participants did not regard overlooking a wrong as forgiveness. The Pro-Action factor has its highest loadings on doing i.e., seeking reconciliation.

The Religious Response factor (*pray for the other, ask God's forgiveness, pray to God, ask other's forgiveness, forgive the other, do something for other, God requires*) the authors regard as similar to Wade's (1989) behavioural factor, Movement Toward God.



Also, they found a relationship between religious preference and forgiving. Protestants, especially evangelicals were more forgiving than Catholics, Jews, and no/other religion. However, the religious variable is complex, a non-significant difference between religious preference and the Forgiving Motive factor suggests that religious and no/other religion may not differ in their *motives* for forgiving. Thus, while the Personal Religiousness factor correlated with all four first-order factors so that being religious may result in a participant making more forgiving responses, they tend not to be more forgiving on all the forgiveness factors. The authors suggest that the level of forgiveness responses might be due either to conformity or a response set.

The fourth factor, Hostility (Wade's 1989 cognitive factor, Revenge) is essentially unforgiveness. One cannot proceed with forgiveness while planning revenge! Although they used different questions Gorsuch and Hao (1993) regard their findings as substantiating the difference between forgiveness and unforgiveness while also revealing the *motives* underlying a forgiveness response.

The authors conclude that forgiveness "is best understood as a complex, multifactorial construct." (p. 345). They regard the factors identified, using a larger sample than Wade's (1989) and of a wider population than students, as (i) looking at the relationship between religiosity and forgiveness and (ii) identifying four important dimensions of forgiveness. It is a measure of the newness of research in forgiveness that only recently has empirical work being undertaken which acknowledges the complexity of the construct. This has been long overdue.

Subkoviak, Enright, Ching-Ru, Gassin, Freedman, Olson, and Sarinopoulos, 1995

The theoretical framework for the development of the forgiveness measure (Enright Forgiveness Inventory, EFI) is grounded in a moral/developmental perspective of forgiveness within the Christian religious tradition. The use of forgiveness therapy/intervention is for therapeutic purposes foremost among a clinical population, but with application to moral education.

A pool of items were generated by a panel of faculty and graduate members and assessed for the presence or absence of positive/negative affect, cognition and behaviour (25 items in each section a total of 150 items). The final questionnaire was reduced to 60 items, 10 in each of the six sections.

First, each participant was asked to recall the most recent experience of someone hurting them deeply and unfairly (1 no hurt to 5 a great deal of hurt). Information as to the



identity of the transgressor, whether they were living or dead time elapsed since the incident and a description of the incident was also requested.

Eight items at the end of the test assessed pseudoforgiveness (Hunter, 1978; Augsburger, 1981), a consistency check and a one-item forgiveness question asking the extent to which the participant had forgiven the offender (5-point Likert scale “not at all” to “complete forgiveness”). Those participants who scored 20 or more on the pseudo-forgiveness items were omitted from the study.

The authors comment that although there is high internal consistency between the scales they should still be regarded as separate scales. The scale is relatively new and as far as this author is aware has not been used in any other published empirical study. The authors claim that it is a “psychometrically sound measure of interpersonal forgiveness in late adolescence” and that the scales do measure different dimensions i.e. respondents were most positive in their cognitions about transgressors and most negative in affect, which is related to anxiety. There was no relationship between the EFI and psychological depression. Possibly because the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck & Steer, 1987) is not the most useful tool for a non-clinical sample (Hargrave & Sells, 1997, used Burns Depression Checklist BDC). It is also possible that a specific forgiveness scale needs to be developed for a clinical sample and a different one is required for the general population. However, the EFI appears to be a further step along the road to a measure of forgiveness, which acknowledges the multi-dimensional nature of the construct, treating forgiveness as an attitude, and will in future be used in cross-cultural studies of forgiveness.

#### Hargrave and Sells (1997)

The scale is based on Hargrave’s (1994) forgiveness model which identified four stations of forgiveness (exonerating (insight and understanding) and forgiveness (giving an opportunity for compensation and the overt act of forgiveness)). Hargrave approached the construct from a family therapy perspective (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1987; Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986; Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1984). Forgiveness is a means of dealing with destructive entitlement (individuals seeking to redress the balance of injustice between dyads) through reconciliation and the healing of pain experienced in abusive family relationships.

Therefore, the Exonerating/Forgiveness scale involves four subscales, Insight, Understanding, Opportunity for Compensation, and an Overt Act of Forgiving. The whole process is firmly relational and involves both parties co-operating in the act of forgiveness.



No religious dimension is mentioned or included as a variable. The second scale is concerned with pain and consists of four subscales; shame, rage, control, and chaos. The two scales form the Interpersonal Relationship Resolution Scale (IRRS).

The scale was developed in five stages. First, the above constructs were identified from literature and Hargrave's own framework (Hargrave 1994; Hargrave & Anderson, 1992). In the preliminary IRRS 162 items were used in a forced choice questionnaire providing univariate linear scores on the eight subscales. The reliability and construct validity of the scale was tested on 164 subjects.

It would appear that the scale will be valuable in a clinical setting however, the authors acknowledged that "forgiveness is a complex concept" and "that other substantial constructs dealing with forgiveness and pain are likely to exist. The IRRS, therefore, is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive as a clinical or research instrument." The population sample included both clinical and nonclinical participants.

The scale may not adequately differentiate between an understanding of forgiveness per se and an understanding of the causes and remedies for the pain inflicted (i) by a particular transgression(s) and (ii) the loss of a valued relationship. Perhaps a time has been reached in forgiveness research when measures of forgiveness should not be validated against clinical scales but the intercorrelation between a forgiveness measure and measures of attribution, attachment, acceptability of accounts, etc.

The challenge is to develop a measure which allows the client or individual: to arrive at their own understanding of forgiveness; gain insight into the cause of the transgression; and review their initial attribution, taking account of both dispositional and situational factors. The advantage of Hargrave and Sells' (1997) approach is that they place forgiveness within a relationship context, but there is the possibility of confusing forgiveness and recognition of pain.

Pollard, Anderson, Anderson and Jennings (1998)

The authors claim that the purpose of the scale is to measure forgiveness in the intergenerational family. The theoretical framework is one shared with Hargrave and Sells (1997), that is relational ethics (Boszormenyi-Nagy et al. 1991). Individuals complete the scale to measure the forgiveness abilities of both their family of origin and a current primary relationship. Five areas are identified: (1) realisation, (2) recognition, (3) reparation, (4) restitution, and (5) resolution and are measured in subscales. The authors combined the role of forgiver and forgiven.



The scale reflects the approach to forgiveness of its authors. Forgiveness is identified in relational terms, specifically as five constructs, which deal with the *process* of forgiveness. Previous identification of forgiveness with anger has been replaced by acknowledgement of pain. This shift of perspective has increased the emphasis on devising scales to measure interpersonal forgiveness, and the social implications of forgiveness, rather than purely health benefits. The former approach may be a more fruitful area. However, the way the role of forgiver and forgiven are combined might be a weakness. Although people do act in both roles, it is not necessarily the case that either their understanding of forgiveness, or how it operates, is exactly the same in both modes. Also, as family or origin formed one subscale a measure of attachment might also have been a useful tool. It is possible that attachment might also exert an influence on attitudes to forgiveness within the family.

### Summary

Gorsuch and Hao (1993) claim that forgiveness is a multi-dimensional construct, however this approach is not reflected in all the forgiveness literature. If it is multi-dimensional then the dimensions need to be identified. There is no general consensus amongst writers which dimensions constitute the construct. A related question is, "What do people understand by forgiveness?" This question is concerned with the content of the construct and not about how people behave to enact a forgiveness process.

The separation by some researchers of forgiveness from a religious context seems to have been both a process of evolution, and a reflection the background of the researcher (Hargrave & Sells, 1997; McCullough, Worthington & Rachal, 1997; Weiner, Graham, Peter & Zmuidinas, 1991). However, an understanding of forgiveness, which has a more universal application, would appear to be a priority if forgiveness is to be investigated in social psychology.

Haber (1991) states that the, "Logical separation of morality from religion allows us to examine forgiveness from a moral perspective quite apart from religious dogma." (p. 3) This assertion might be extended. Forgiveness is a construct whose understanding and content should be established empirically rather than by intuition, bias, or religious dogma.

Following on from the separation of forgiveness from a strictly religious context it is now possible to view it as an interpersonal, two-way transaction between dyads and no longer a one-way directional action from a forgiver to a forgiven. In a Christian setting God forgives the sin which separates a person from Himself and this lays a duty on the



sinner to imitate Divine forgiveness. Thus the emphasis is laid on the sin and its atonement by the Cross. The model is circular (God $\Rightarrow$ person $\Rightarrow$ person $\Rightarrow$ God). In a secular setting the emphasis is not on the transgression (it cannot be undone only recompensed) but on the relationship. Thus, the direction is two-way (person $\Leftrightarrow$ person) and the transgression is dealt with by *each* assuming responsibility (i) for the transgression and (ii) to restore the relationship (Hargrave & Sells, 1997).

The seven measures of forgiveness have been reviewed. Reliability and validity claims are made with reference to other therapeutic measures, which may limit their usefulness as general measures of forgiveness. They are all aimed to meet diagnostic needs, although the Enright group is also looking to introduce forgiveness as part of moral education. It would be useful to compare measures of forgiveness to establish if in fact they are measuring the same thing, and to correlate these measures with non-clinical scales. As a consequence, the following study examined two of the principal forgiveness measures reviewed above, Wade (1989) and Subkoviak et al. (1995) which focus on the process of forgiveness and the measures used in the current investigation (a content measure).

It might be possible to argue that the construct is defined by its processes. That is, there is no real distinction between the content of forgiveness and the process of forgiving. If this were the case then it would be expected that the components identified in this thesis would correlate with other scales purporting to measure forgiveness. On the other hand, if the distinction between content and process was a valid one, then measures which do not distinguish between content and process should have a low correlation with the forgiveness measure developed in this thesis.

This study explored the relationship between the forgiveness measure of this thesis (SFS), the Wade (1989) forgiveness scale, and the Enright Forgiveness Inventory EFI (Subkoviak et al., 1995).

## Study 7

### Hypotheses

#### Ho 1.

No significant correlation will be found between the scores obtained on the EFI (Subkoviak, et al. 1995) and the Wade (1989) subscales.

#### Ho 2.

No significant correlation will be found between the scores on the SFS, the EFI (Subkoviak et al. 1995) and the Wade (1989) subscales.

### Method

#### Participants

The participants were first year psychology students at the University of Glasgow. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed, 25 were not returned, and 9 were incomplete and excluded, 166 questionnaires were completed and used in the study, 48 males (28.8%) and 118 (71.2%) females. The students had only just begun their university studies and therefore were relatively naive in reference to participation in experiments. As a consequence it was anticipated that the experience of the sample would be more representative of that of the general population. (Tables 12-9a, 12-9b).

#### Measures of Forgiveness

Both the Wade (1989) forgiveness measure and the EFI (1995) have already been discussed. These self-report scales were chosen because they are regarded as psychometrically sound, both treat forgiveness as an attitude, and have subscales measuring cognition, behaviour, and affect which permit ease of comparison. The EFI (1995) has a test-retest reliability of .86 and validity, assessed against a single forgiveness item at .65.



Demographic questions were included and five measures of religiosity: religious affiliation, frequency of attendance of worship, belief in life after death, belief in God, perceived religious commitment.

The questionnaires were randomly ordered except that the demographic questions always came at the beginning. Specific instructions for completion were included with each of the three scales. There was no particular attempt to hide the word forgiveness, as participants were encouraged to access their forgiveness schema, if they had one, when completing the measures.

### Statistical analysis

A Pearson correlational analysis was undertaken to compare the components of the SFS and the subscales of the other two measures.

A factor analysis was conducted using the loadings of the focus phrases on the components from Study 5 in order to obtain the scores of the participants on each of the seven components. The seven components in the SFS and the scores on the six sub-scales of the EFI (1995) and Wade (1989) were subject to a principal axis oblique analysis.

### Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to first year students at the beginning of the session as they waited to register in the psychology laboratory or lecture hall. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it either to the experimenter, or put it in a labelled box in the laboratory. Only first year students were asked to complete the questionnaires.

The sequence of questionnaires was varied to form six different booklet presentations to minimise order effects. An equal proportion of each of the six order booklets was distributed.

When subjects returned the questionnaires they were given a de-briefing sheet, other participants had the opportunity to contact the experimenter.

## Results

### Demographic Statistics

The majority of the participants (129; 82.2%) were under twenty, of the remainder 9.6% (16) were between 20-25, 4.2% (7) were between 26-30 and 3% (5) over 30 years. The religious affiliation of the group was Church of Scotland (30.4%), no religious affiliation

(34.2%), Roman Catholic (18%), Baptist (3.8%) and other religions (13.3%). Regarding religiosity 78 (47%) reported a neutral position, 43 (25.9%) religious/very religious, 16.3% not interested and 8 (4.8%) responded as anti-religious.

#### A Comparison of the Enright Forgiveness Inventory EFI (1995) and Wade's (1989) Forgiveness Measure

First, taking the intercorrelations between the three subscales of each measure separately. There were highly significant correlations (0.66 to 0.96) between all the main subscales of the EFI (1995). Although the correlations between the Pseudoforgiveness measure and the other sub-scales were lower (0.22 to 0.38) they were still highly significant. Finally, the state of forgiveness question had high correlations with all the subscales including Pseudoforgiveness 0.38 to 0.74 (see Table 12-1).

The Wade (1989) subscales also showed highly significant intercorrelations (0.42 to 0.92). However, the exception is Positive Behaviour which is not significantly correlated with the other subscales (see Table 12-2).

Most of the intercorrelations between the subscales of the EFI (1995) and Wade (1989) Table 12-3 are highly significant ranging from 0.33 to 0.70. However, Wade's Positive Behaviour does not correlate with any of the EFI (1995) subscales. Negative Behaviour and Total Behaviour have smaller correlations with the Wade's subscales not significantly correlated with the EFI Pseudoforgiveness subscale (see Table 12-3).

Turning to the intercorrelations between the components of the SFS. First, the loadings obtained from Study 4 (which for the purposes of this study are treated as a standardised analysis) were used to calculate the individual scores for each of the components. In general, the intercorrelations between the SFS component scores are all highly significant with the exception of Condoning: in the forgiver mode there are two significant correlations (Religious and New Beginning components) and in the forgiven mode only one insignificant correlation (Relationships component). Table 12-4 gives the correlations between the components within mode and Table 12-5 the correlations between the components across mode.

#### A Comparison of the Three Measures: EFI (1995), Wade (1989), and the SFS

In comparing the EFI (1995) and Wade (1989) with the SFS only the Total Score of the measures were used. (There were high intercorrelations within the EFI (1995) and Wade (1989) subscales and between the subscales of each measure.) The EFI Pseudoforgiveness



and Wade's Positive Behaviour were included separately because of their low correlations with the other subscales.

There were few significant correlations between the four subscales and the SFS components (see Table 12-6). Wade's Positive Behaviour significantly correlated with the following components: Religious (FR, -0.45; FN, -0.18), Legal (FR, -0.45; FN, -0.19), Condoning (FR -0.27), New Beginning (FR, -0.32). Wade's Total Score with Religious (FN, -0.24). The only significant correlation between the SFS components and the EFI (1995) Total Score was Condoning (FR, 0.28)

As a consequence of the above, it was to be expected that there would be few significant correlations between the SFS focus phrases and the other two measures (see Table 12-7). The EFI Total Score correlates with *remit the penalty* (FR) *no longer hurting* (FN) both at  $p = .05$  level. Pseudoforgiveness correlates at .05 level with *pardon* (FR) *and amnesty* (FR) and at the .01 level with *restore a broken relationship* (FN).

Wade's Total Score correlates at .05 level with *love keeps no record of wrongs* (FR), *God forgives us so we must forgive other people* (FN) and at .01 level *we must forgive our enemies if we expect forgiveness* (FN). Interestingly these are the three religious focus phrases.

Wade's (1989) Positive Behaviour correlates at .01 level with *we must forgive our enemies if we expect forgiveness* (FR), and at the .05 level with *pardon* (FR), *amnesty* (FN), *broken wounds healed* (FN), and *wipe the slate clean* (FN).

#### Factor Analysis of the EFI (1995), Wade (1989), and the SFS

Although 166 participants took part in the study only 63 on them completed all the forger mode questions. Kline (1994) suggests that 100 subjects are necessary for an effective factor analysis. The factor analysis for the forger mode must therefore be regarded with caution.

A principal axis oblique analysis of the EFI (1995), Wade (1989) and the factor-component scores for the SFS did not give any clear indication as to whether five, six, or seven factors should be extracted. As the six and seven factor solutions revealed some factor splitting a five-factor solution seemed the best compromise. A principal axis oblique analysis was undertaken. This analysis produced five factors (see Table 12-8).

Factor 1 appeared to be an EFI factor with high loadings on the EFI subscales and moderate loadings on Wade's subscales. Factor 4 was called a Wade factor with high loadings on the Wade sub-scales and moderate loadings on the EFI subscales. Neither of

these factors had any significant loadings on the SFS components. The three remaining factors all loaded on the SFS components. Factor 2 was called a General Forgiveness factor with high loadings on all seven components in both modes (except Condoning, FR). Factor 3 was labelled a Religious factor with high loadings on the Religious component in both modes and Wade's Positive Behaviour and moderate loadings on most of the components. Factor 5 was labelled a Condoning factor with loadings on Condoning (both modes), Pseudoforgiveness, and New Beginning (FN).

The findings of the factor analysis tie in closely with those of the correlational analysis.

### Discussion

The first hypothesis stated that there would be no significant correlations between the scores on the EFI (1995) and the Wade (1989) subscales. In fact two subscales, those measuring thoughts and feelings were highly correlated. The reason seems to be that the wording of the items made the same kind of distinction. Both the EFI and Wade scales divided cognitions into thoughts about the person e.g., evil, loving and wishing them well. Similarly, with emotions the subscale items ranged from positive (happy, good) through neutral to negative (angry). The emotions and cognitions may refer to those experienced at the time of the transgression, during the intervening period, and up to the decision to forgive, or withhold forgiveness.

However, Wade's Positive Behaviour subscale appears to be the most distinctive of all the six subscales. The items range from holding onto the offence e.g., I'm not letting go of the offence, through to reconciliation e.g., I made an effort to be more friendly. In addition, Wade included five specifically religious items e.g., I gave my feelings to God. The comparable EFI subscale included items such as reach out to him or her, but no specifically religious items.

Hypothesis 1 cannot be fully rejected. It would appear that while the thoughts and feelings subscales have high correlations Wade's (1989) Positive Behaviour appears to be measuring something different. The explanation appears to be the inclusion of specifically religious items. It may be those individuals; both religious and non-religious may react negatively to religious items. Three recommendations are suggested as a result of these findings. First, neither the Wade (1989) nor EFI (1995) scales distinguish between content and process. The distinction is made along attitudinal lines, making no distinction between



content and process. These two dimensions should be clearly distinguished in the selection of items. Second, when forgiveness measures are used, or part of these forgiveness scales are incorporated into research, the presence of specifically religious items should be controlled as they may bias the results. As scales proliferate it would appear that needless duplication could be avoided. Forgiveness scales should be compared with each other rather than using clinical measures. Finally, Subkoviak et al. (1995) recognised the highly significant intercorrelations between the EFI subscales (with the exception of Pseudoforgiveness) but claimed there were sufficient differences to warrant the use of separate subscales. The results of this study indicate that one scale may be sufficient.

The Pseudoforgiveness subscale had much lower correlations with the other subscales (see Table 12-1) which lends support to Subkoviak et al.'s (1995) decision to reject participants who scored higher than 20 on the scale.

#### Comparing the SFS with the EFI (1995) and Wade's (1989) measure

It was suggested that there would be a moderate correlation between the scores on the SFS and the other two measures. The results of the correlational analysis indicate, with one or two exceptions, that the correlations are not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. This was an unexpected finding.

At the level of item analysis only 6 focus phrases in the forgiver mode and 7 in the forgiven mode reached significance (see Table 12-7). The exception being the correlation of the religious focus phrases in both modes with Wade's Positive Behaviour and Total Score. Attention has already been drawn to the fact that this subscale is of a different character to her other subscales. The items on the SFS are therefore distinct from those on the EFI (1995) and Wade (1989). The explanation is probably that they are measuring different dimensions of the construct. Thus the EFI and Wade measures are geared to process and the SFS to content.

The factor analysis must be regarded with caution because of the lower number of participants in the forgiver mode. However, the results are in line with those of the correlational analysis. It is possible that a second order factor analysis would combine the EFI (1995) factor 1 and Wade (1989) factor 4 into a single factor omitting Pseudoforgiveness.

The remaining three factors are associated with the SFS. Factor 2 seems to be a General Forgiveness factor with high loadings on Healing (FR, .80; FN, .77), New Beginning (FR, .82; FN, .85), and Guilt Reduction (FR, .86; FN, .76). Factor 3 has high

loadings on Religious (FR, .82; FN, .74). The last factor loads on Condoning (FR, -.32; FN, -.30), New Beginning (FN, -.39) and Pseudoforgiveness (.57). The picture as far as the SFS is concerned is similar to that of the higher order factor analysis of Study 5. With a General Forgiveness factor, a Religious factor and a Condoning factor. However, this analysis reveals that Pseudoforgiveness seems to fall into the same category as Condoning. It has already been argued that condoning may form part of forgiveness for some individuals. If this is the case then excluding such individuals from studies may not be justified.

All the subscales purport to measure forgiveness, but the question this study has raised is, "What is being measured?" In other words, it is a question of validity. The argument put forward here is that scales should distinguish clearly between items measuring content and those measuring process. It would then be possible to measure both dimensions before and after treatment to find out the effect, if any, of the treatment (therapy, counselling, or forgiveness education) on a person's understanding of forgiveness, willingness to adopt the forgiving process, and their actual forgiving behaviour.

The focus of the instructions may also affect the way the participants respond to the items. For example, the EFI (1995) asks participants to, "Think of the most recent experience of someone hurting you unfairly and deeply." Wade (1989) instructs her participants to think of a specific person. The SFS asks participants to think of a particular event when they acted in the role of forgiver and one forgiven. Their understanding of forgiveness is determined by agreement or disagreement with the focus phrases. The EFI focuses on the intrapersonal hurt, Wade on the transgressor which would also include recalling hurt, and the SFS on understanding i.e., cognitive representation of the construct. The EFI and Wade direct participants to post-transgressional thoughts, affect, and behaviour. The SFS is concerned with the abstract representation accessed through recalling either a prototype, or an exemplar, of the role of forgiver or forgiven. It is possible that the focus should be on the type of relationship i.e., an external focus, rather than internal affect. However, whatever the instructions, the experimenter has no control over the recall of participants. This study has identified important differences and implications in forgiveness measures.



### Limitations of the Study

A discussion of problems associated with interpreting factors has been outlined in Chapter 10. Second, the sample is predominantly female and relatively young. There are specific problems associated with generalising from a student sample. Despite these reservations the study has provided some interesting insights into forgiveness measures.

### Conclusion

If forgiveness measures are to be developed which can be used for the general population then a distinction between content and process is important. Before measuring willingness to forgive a person's understanding of forgiveness i.e., their cognitive representation should be established so that changes due to treatment can be measured. This is the case for a clinical and non-clinical population. In addition, forgiveness measures need to be compared with non-clinical scales for reliability and validity if they are to be of use in forgiveness research in social psychology.

Table 12-1.

Correlations Between the EFI (1995) Subscales

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Positive affect	1.00	.83	.95	.80	.72	.83	.89	.68	.77	.91	.24	.64
2. Negative affect	.83	1.00	.96	.72	.74	.79	.74	.75	.77	.87	.31	.74
3. Total affect	.95	.96	1.00	.80	.76	.84	.83	.74	.81	.93	.28	.72
4. Positive behaviour	.80	.72	.80	1.00	.79	.93	.79	.66	.74	.85	.23	.62
5. Negative behaviour	.72	.74	.76	.79	1.00	.92	.71	.71	.72	.84	.22	.57
6. Total behaviour	.83	.79	.84	.93	.93	1.00	.81	.73	.79	.93	.22	.65
7. Positive cognitions	.83	.74	.83	.79	.71	.81	1.00	.82	.94	.89	.28	.60
8. Negative cognitions	.68	.75	.74	.66	.71	.73	.82	1.00	.94	.82	.19*	.58
9. Total cognitions	.77	.77	.81	.74	.72	.79	.94	.94	1.00	.88	.24	.61
10. Total score	.91	.87	.93	.85	.84	.93	.89	.82	.88	1.00	.23	.69
11. Pseudoforgiveness	.24	.31	.28	.23	.22	.22	.28	.19*	.24	.23	1.00	.38
12. State of forgiveness	.64	.74	.72	.62	.57	.65	.60	.58	.61	.69	.38	1.00

Note. All correlations are significant  $p<.01$  except \* which is significant at  $p<.05$



Table 12-2.

Correlations Between the Wade (1989) Subscales

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. PT	1.00	.57	.86	.45	.42	.57	.00	.55	.58	.69
2. NT	.57	1.00	.89	.45	.62	.69	-.06	.68	.62	.81
3. TT	.86	.89	1.00	.49	.60	.69	-.03	.68	.66	.83
4. PF	.45	.45	.49	1.00	.51	.87	.57	.61	.68	.78
5. NF	.42	.62	.60	.51	1.00	.77	.48	.64	.66	.76
6. TF	.57	.69	.69	.87	.77	1.00	.62	.76	.79	.92
7. PB	.00*	-.06*	-.03*	.57	.48	.62	1.00	.52	.88	.73
8. NB	.55	.68	.68	.61	.64	.76	.52	1.00	.88	.87
9. TB	.58	.62	.66	.68	.66	.79	.88	.88	1.00	.92
10. TS	.69	.81	.83	.78	.76	.92	.73	.87	.92	1.00

Note. All correlations are significant at  $p < .01$  except \* which are not significant

Table 12-3. Correlations Between the EFI (1995) and Wade (1989) Subscales

Subscale	Positive thoughts	Negative thoughts	Total thoughts	Positive feelings	Negative feelings	Total feelings	Positive behavior	Negative behavior	Total behavior	Total score
EFI										
1. Positive affect	.57	.42	.55	.42	.48	.53	.11*	.55	.59	.62
2. Negative affect	.60	.55	.65	.47	.57	.63	.13*	.62	.62	.70
3. Total affect	.62	.51	.63	.47	.55	.61	.13*	.61	.64	.70
4. Positive behaviour	.49	.44	.50	.34	.42	.45	.09*	.56	.55	.58
5. Negative behaviour	.44	.49	.50	.33	.48	.46	.05*	.55	.49	.55
6. Total behaviour	.52	.49	.55	.35	.47	.47	.08*	.59	.56	.60
7. Positive cognitions	.61	.54	.63	.34	.44	.47	.09*	.52	.52	.60
8. Negative cognitions	.54	.64	.66	.35	.51	.51	.03*	.58	.53	.62
9. Total cognitions	.61	.60	.69	.35	.48	.50	.06*	.57	.53	.64
10. Total score	.60	.54	.63	.42	.50	.56	.10*	.61	.61	.66
11. Pseudoforgiveness	.28	.23	.31	.19**	.24	.25	.05*	.12*	.12*	.25
12. State of forgiveness	.57	.51	.60	.36	.52	.54	.16*	.50	.53	.63

Note. All correlations are significant at  $p < .01$  except \* which are not significant and \*\* which is significant at  $p < .05$



Table 12-4.

Correlations Between the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes for the Components of Forgiveness

FORGIVER							
Comp.	Healing	Cond.	R'ships	Religious	Legal	NB	GR
Healing	1.00	.13	.65**	.45**	.58**	.70**	.75**
Cond.	.13	1.00	.09	.38**	.25	.35**	.22
R'ships	.65**	.09	1.00	.47**	.58**	.76**	.58**
Religious	.45**	.38**	.47**	1.00	.70**	.68**	.64**
Legal	.58**	.25	.58**	.70**	1.00	.79**	.81**
NB	.70**	.35**	.76**	.68**	.79**	1.00	.78**
GR	.75**	.22	.58**	.64**	.81**	.78**	1.00
FORGIVEN							
Comp.	Healing	Cond.	R'ships	Religious	Legal	NB	GR
Healing	1.00	.28**	.56**	.29**	.19*	.68**	.64**
Cond.	.28**	1.00	.16	.17*	.35**	.45**	.42**
R'ships	.56**	.16	1.00	.25**	.31**	.76**	.53**
Religious	.29**	.17*	.25**	1.00	.36**	.33**	.37**
Legal	.19*	.35**	.31**	.36**	1.00	.44**	.31**
NB	.68**	.45**	.76**	.33**	.44**	1.00	.66**
GR	.64**	.42**	.53**	.37**	.31**	.66**	1.00

\* p < .05    \*\* p < .01 2-tailed

Table 12-5.  
Correlations Between the Components in the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Component	Correlations (FR/FN)
Healing	.72**
Condoning	.45**
Relationships	.52**
Religious	.71**
Legal	.52**
New Beginning	.76**
Guilt Reduction	.64**

\*\* p < .01 two-tailed



Table 12-6.

Correlations Between the EFI (1995), Wade (1989), and the Components of the SFS in the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Subscale	Healing	Condoning	Relationships	Religious	Legal	New Beginning	Guilt Release
FORGIVER							
EFI Total score	.01	.28*	.04	.15	.22	.01	.17
Pseudoforgiveness	.08	.19	-.03	.09	.15	.10	.10
Wade Positive Behaviour	-.03	-.27*	-.16	-.45**	-.45**	-.32*	-.28*
Wade Total score	-.02	-.16	-.13	-.19	-.24	-.17	-.19
FORGIVEN							
EFI Total score	.17	.07	-.01	-.07	.04	.09	.06
Pseudoforgiveness	.15	-.09	.14	.07	-.02	.09	.13
Wade Positive Behaviour	.13	.00	-.09	-.18*	-.19*	-.04	.11
Wade Total score	.03	.01	-.02	-.24**	-.02	.00	-.08

\*p<.05    \*\*p<.01 two-tailed

Table 12-7.

Correlations Between the EFI (1995), Wade (1989), and the Focus Phrases of the SFS in the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes

Subscale	Remit the penalty	We must forgive..	Pardon	Amnesty	Love keeps no record...	No longer hurting	Wipe the slate...
EFI Total score	-.26*	-	-	-	-		
Pseudoforgiveness	-	-	.26*	.18*	-		
Wade Positive Behaviour	-	-.41**	-.30*	-	-		
Wade Total score	-	-	-	-	-.19*		
Subscale	God forgives ...	Amnesty	Broken wounds...	Restore a broken..	We must forgive..	No longer hurting	Wipe the slate...
EFI Total score	-	-	-	-	-	.19*	-
Pseudoforgiveness	-	-	-	.27**	-	-	-
Wade Positive Behaviour	-	-.18*	.19*		-	-	.18*
Wade Total score	-.18*	-	-		-.24**	-	-

\* p < .05 \*\* p < .01  
Only phrases with at least one significant result are included



Table 12-8.

The Factor Loadings for the EFI (1995), Wade (1989), and the SFS

Subscale	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Enright					
Positive Affect	.92			.55	
Negative Affect	.83			.71	
Positive Behaviour	.89			.56	
Negative Behaviour	.86			.60	
Positive Cognition	.92			.62	
Negative Cognition	.80			.68	
Pseudo-Forgiveness					.57
Wade					
Positive Thoughts	.63			.78	
Negative Thoughts	.59			.86	
Positive Feelings	.54			.87	
Negative Feelings	.58			.86	
Positive Behaviour	.46		-.62	.65	
Negative Behaviour	.64			.89	
SFS Forgiver					
Healing		.80			
Condoning			.50		-.35
Relationship		.64	.33		
Religious		.55	.82		
Legal		.77	.63		
New Beginning		.82	.58		
Guilt Release		.86	.38		
SFS Forgiven					
Healing		.77			
Condoning		.56	.47		-.30
Relationship		.69	.45		
Religious		.38	.74		
Legal		.45	.58		
New Beginning		.85	.55		-.39
Guilt Release		.76	.44		

## CHAPTER 13

### DISCUSSION

We are not to measure forgiveness as narrowly as fools dream. (Martin Luther)

#### Introduction

The purpose of the research was to establish empirically the content of the construct of forgiveness. In other words, to explore people's understanding or cognitive representation of the term forgiveness. In order to do this a series of studies were undertaken to establish the components of forgiveness and investigate how other variables interacted with the components. As McCullough et al. (1998) noted it is only recently that theoretical work looking at the social-psychological nature of forgiveness has been undertaken.

A review of the main findings of the studies is undertaken to give an overall picture of the development of the research. Next, the contribution of the componential approach to forgiveness research is discussed and how the findings are related to current research.

#### A Review of the Main Findings of the Six Studies

#### Multi-dimensionality

Componential approach to the construct of forgiveness.

The first study revealed that participants distinguished between Condoning and the other three components (Relationships, New Beginning, and Guilt Reduction). The finding supports the claim in the philosophical literature that condoning is not part of forgiveness. However, in the forgiver mode 46% recorded a match response for *blind eye*, one of the



condoning focus phrases. While in the forgiven mode over a quarter of participants recorded a match response for *blind eye* and *overlooking* (condoning focus phrases).

The second study, using a 5-point Likert scale confirmed the findings of the first study. Although caution has to be exercised because the scales were different and the inclusion of a “neutral” category resulted in a greater spread of scores. Participants did distinguish between Condoning and the other three components. While a similar percentage did regard condoning as part of their understanding of forgiveness.

Thus, while the literature excludes condoning from the construct of forgiveness this research revealed that some individuals do see a connection between the two. If the religious roots of forgiveness are emphasised, then condoning at first sight appears at odds with the idea of Divine forgiveness. However, the idea that a moral wrong could be covered over, or blotted out, may encourage a view that religion does in essence appear to condone offences.

If forgiveness is essentially an interpersonal strategy which may have evolutionary roots (antecedent to religious ones) then condoning may have a role to play in providing a “breathing space” for the victim. Perhaps it is a mechanism for putting the relationship “on hold” until individuals are able to decide on a response e.g., anger, revenge, forgiveness, etc. In other words, condoning may allow a person to respond to a damaging event in a way which allows the relationship to continue at least in the short-term. A wife may turn a blind eye to her husband’s infidelity on the grounds that it was a “one-night stand” and he did not love the girl. Interviewing individuals who regard condoning as part of forgiveness may be a useful means of clarifying their understanding of forgiveness and condoning.

The first two studies identified four of the components of the construct of forgiveness. However, it was evident that the components did not adequately reflect all the categories present in the literature. An extended list would provide a more comprehensive measure and one which better reflected the forgiveness literature. Three further components (with their component focus phrases) were identified from the literature: Religious, Legal, and Healing. However, the final list of seven components is not regarded as definitive. In non-western societies which are communal rather than individualistic and follow a world religion other than Christianity, the components may behave differently. Indeed, other components may exist. Elder (1998) pointed out that Buddhism and Hinduism with their law of karma have “no formal place for human repentance and divine forgiveness.” (p. 158) It is possible in these traditions that components such as wisdom and compassion would need to be included.



A correlational analysis had supported the seven components, in both modes, identified from the literature. The next step was to identify factors in each mode using factor analysis. If forgiveness were not a multidimensional component then one main factor would emerge in both modes. However, if forgiveness was a multi-dimensional construct it should be possible to identify most, if not all, of the components.

The results of the factor analysis indicated that there were seven factors in both modes namely, Healing, Condoning, Relationships, Religious, Legal, New Beginning, and Guilt Reduction. Thus the multi-dimensional perspective was supported. The factors also reveal something of the structure of the construct. Each factor can be identified as a component (or factor-component) and represents an input into the construct which has its own identity but also correlates with the other components. The factor-components are robust and appear not to be affected by the severity of the transgression, who is responsible, the perception of blame, or relationship to the transgressor.

Condoning was extracted as a separate and distinctive factor in Study 4. It may be an important element in a person's overall perception of forgiveness and this needs to be acknowledged and not summarily dismissed. Further qualitative and quantitative research needs to be conducted to establish why some individuals include, and others exclude, condoning as part of their understanding of forgiveness. Condoning is condemned by writers as immoral because it implies a refusal to acknowledge that a moral wrong has been committed. However, it is far less costly than forgiveness, and may achieve the immediate goals of the victim i.e., the continuance of the relationship. Nor does it rule out other responses in the future. Condoning is clearly distinguished from forgiveness in most participants' responses and may be seen as an alternative choice to full-blown forgiveness. Thus in Study 6 in the factor analysis, factor 5 loaded on Pseudoforgiveness .57, Condoning -.35 (FR), -.30 (FN), and New Beginning -.39.

#### Core/Non-core components.

A clearer picture of the components emerged in the correlational analysis. First, four components (Relationships, New Beginning, Guilt Reduction, and Healing) seemed to cluster together and had moderate correlations with each other. The general response to the cluster grouping was in the agree direction with only 6% to 21% disagreeing. It would appear that the majority of respondents regard these four components as representing their understanding of forgiveness in both modes.



A second grouping appeared to be components which did not correlate with the cluster grouping or with each other in a consistent way, these were Legal, Religious, Condoning. Participants' responses to these components were multi-directional. Condoning received a high percentage of disagree responses in both modes (FR, 52%; FN, 56%). In other words, people differentiated between core and non-core components.

The Religious component received a high percentage of disagree responses (FR, 49%; FN, 38%) and low percentage of agree responses (FR, 11%; FN, 13%). If people respond to focus phrases with a religious connotation in a negative manner are they responding in the same way they do to Condoning? Or, is there something specific about the Religious component which causes them to reject it? It could be that people have an antipathy to religious dictums, especially in our secular and materialistic society which questions all forms of authority. It is also possible that the layman does not necessarily make, or wish to make, the connection between forgiveness and religion. However, although religion may be rejected as part of the cognitive representation of forgiveness it still may influence the actual process of forgiveness.

The cognitive representation is necessarily abstract. However, once the process of forgiveness is embarked on people may go back to their cognitive representation to decide how to respond to the offender and the offence. At this point, the religiosity variable may play an important role. Mullet et al. (1998) found that his factor Revenge Versus Forgiveness was strongly linked with age, gender belief, and religious practice. Older people, women, believers and church attenders scored lower (greater agreement) than young people, men, non-believers and non-attenders.

The religious component may serve to direct people's attributions during the forgiveness process in more specific ways. Gorsuch and Hao (1993) make a distinction between two religious factors, Personal Religiousness and Religious Conformity. Those people scoring high on the first factor may well score high agreement with the Religious component. Only 20.5% of the sample in this study regarded themselves as "Very religious" or "Religious" and that is about the percentage in both modes giving agree responses to the Religious component focus phrases. The Religious component indicated that the means for the religious ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) and the non-religious group ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = .74$ ) were significantly different,  $t(16.39) = -2.78$ ,  $p < .05$  two-tailed test in the forgiver mode. However, the means were not significantly different for the two groups (religious,  $M = 3.0$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ; non-religious,  $M = 3.4$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) in the forgiven mode.



This is to be expected because the emphasis in religious teaching is on the offended to forgive, however, there is no expectation of the forgiven in terms of being forgiven.

Finally, the Legal component was quite different from the other six in that it received a high percentage of neutral responses (FR, 57%; 61%, FN). If individuals were negative in their response to Condoning and Religious why should they respond in a neutral way to the Legal component? The literature stresses that forgiveness is a gift and a supererogatory act. If this was the view taken by respondents they might have been expected to agree with the Religious focus phrases, especially in the forgiver mode, and disagree with the Legal component. This was not the case. Respondents did not commit themselves in either mode. All the focus phrases (*remit the penalty of; amnesty; acquit*) have justice connotations, perhaps this is too cold and formal for people to comfortably apply to communal relationships (cf. the disagreement with *shake hands*). However, they are still aware of the demands of a moral code and of feelings of justice or injustice, which apply in close relationships (Boszormenyi-Nagy, Grunebaum, & Ulrich, 1991). Perhaps the participants did not understand the focus phrases. However, this seems unlikely, as they were highly educated university students.

The cross-cultural study was designed to compare the profiles of the components in different cultures. The hypothesis was that the core components (Healing, Relationships, New Beginning, and Guilt Reduction) would be the same across cultures. The non-core components (Legal, Religious, and Condoning) would differ between the British, Greek and Cypriot populations. The reasoning was that the core components would be universal and shared by populations, while the non-core components would be most sensitive to cultural (including religious) differences. The results were not as clear-cut as the hypothesis suggested. There were significant differences between the three groups for both the core and non-core components. However, there were far more differences in the non-core components lending some muted support to the hypothesis.

The tantalising question is why the British scored lower (more agreement) on Relationships, that is they agree more that the focus phrases were part of their understanding of the construct than either the Greeks or Cypriots. The suggested explanation was that Britain was more individualistic in its perception of relationships and the Greek-speaking sample more concerned with the extended family and community. However, it could be that this is just an artefact of the different understanding that the British and Greek-speaking groups have of the *patch up a broken relationship* focus phrase. The high score of the Cypriots on the Religious component is more in line with



expectations. What is interesting is the middle position taken by the Greek participants which was unexpected, it was thought that the Cypriots, with a recent history of British rule, would be closer to the British sample. The problem with cross-cultural studies is identifying response bias, the findings could reflect a greater tendency towards agree responses for the Greek-speaking sample compared to the British group.

The core components appear to have certain characteristics as a group.

- They are concerned with the dyadic restoration of a damaged or broken relationship.
- They confer psychological benefit on the individual - both forgiver and forgiven (Witvliet, Ludwig, & Vander-Laan, 2001).
- They have universal application regardless of cultural factors e.g., a new beginning is required if old hurts are to be dealt with.
- They are internal, that is they are related to the needs and goals of the individual.

The non-core components could then be regarded as sharing other characteristics:

- They emerge from legal institutions in a particular society.
- They are external to the individual, that is they are related to societal factors.
- They vary in content with the culture and religion of the society/community.

They are optional rather than specific e.g., an individual may reject the moral or religious norms of their society or community.

The terms core and non-core may not be the best descriptions of these two groups of components. It is possible that the first grouping should be called *primary components*. In other words, they are learnt by the child as they are forgiven by the parent or carer for misdeeds. Thus the importance of the forgiven role in learning what forgiveness actually *means* as opposed to learning *how* to forgive (process). The second group of components would be *secondary components*, which would be learnt later, as the child is socialised into the social norms of their community and society. Learning how to link an understanding (cognitive representation) of forgiveness with an act of forgiving an offender may be the way the components are incorporated. If this is the case it highlights the importance of separating an understanding of forgiveness from the process in order to identify how misconceptions in the former affect the latter.

### Higher order factor analysis.

The higher order factor analysis found two factors in the forgiver mode, a General Forgiveness factor which loaded on all the components and a second factor which was labelled Condoning. In the forgiven mode three factors were identified, factor 1 was a General Forgiveness factor loading on all the components (except Condoning and Religious), factor 2 was labelled Religious and factor 3, Condoning.

Why a Religious factor should emerge in the forgiven mode is tantalising. The earlier suggestion was made that the religious dimension is included in the forgiver role, i.e., both religious and non-religious people are familiar with the Christian injunction for the injured party to forgive so there is little variance for this factor to explain. However, this is not the case in the forgiven mode so more variations between the participants seem to occur. A change is expected in the person who has been forgiven, for example, Gassin's (1998) respondents recorded "further religious development" (p. 83). It is possible that people also learn from being forgiven. Forgiveness experienced by being forgiven may identify more clearly the role of religiosity in understanding the construct. For example, if the individual understands that forgiveness is offered to them as a consequence of the religious beliefs of the forgiver then this may influence the development of their own construct of forgiveness. Mauger et al. (1992) accounted for the differences in rating data between peers and therapists as due to the greater knowledge of clients about how they behave with other people. In other words, the therapists had a different perspective from the client. People may reveal more about themselves to therapists but therapists rarely, or only occasionally, (e.g., group therapy) have the opportunity to observe clients interacting with others.

However, it may be possible to theoretically make a link between the core/non-core components and the findings of the higher order factor analysis. If the forgiven mode is taken as the primary mode in which an understanding of the construct is acquired: first the core components which are internal, personal and deal with dyadic relationships are learnt; second, the non-core components which are external and concerned with societal factors are acquired. It might then be expected that a greater distinction between these two groups of components would be present in the forgiven mode. This in fact is the case. There is a General Forgiveness factor which loads on the core components, while Religion and Condoning form separate factors. This may underline the importance of the forgiven role which has been so woefully ignored in the past. Also, that studies should focus on the individual acting in both roles in order to arrive at a complete picture of (i) how they



understand the construct (ii) how they integrate that understanding with the process of forgiving.

The question of whether forgiveness is uni- or multidimensional may be explained in reference to the results of the higher order factor analysis. At a higher level of analysis forgiveness may, in fact, be unidimensional. Thus the finding in the forgiver mode of two factors, (a General Forgiveness factor, and a Condoning factor) and three in the forgiven mode (a General Forgiveness factor, a Condoning factor, and a Religious factor). However, at a lower level, the components of forgiveness are differentiated in the same way as personality traits are identified at a lower level, and personality types at a higher level.

### Use of Componential Approach in Research and Therapy

The identification of the seven factor-components has important applications. For example, researchers can compare the component profiles of groups of people i.e., clinical and non-clinical populations, different religious traditions, and nationalities. It may be that certain mental illnesses have a distinctive component profile. Or, that the component profiles for marital problems are different from those for abuse. If this were the case then it might have implications for someone beginning the process of forgiveness or receiving forgiveness therapy. If a person's understanding of forgiveness is objectively established then it may be easier to help them progress through the stages of forgiving.

Nations may have their own component profile, which will indicate points of similarity and difference. Thus, the corporate profile of the components of a nation may, or may not, differ from that of individual members of that nation. It would be interesting to investigate the percentage of individuals whose profile is similar or different to the national profile. This might indicate the presence or absence of cohesiveness in society. Two nations seeking peace whose component profiles are disparate might have greater difficulty in reaching an agreement than those nations which share a similar component profile.

### Mode

The integrated approach looked at the person responding in two modes in order to identify differences in perspective between responses in the two roles.

The finding that emerged from the exploratory studies was that the focus phrases received slightly different responses according to mode. The danger was that by having identical focus phrases in both modes participants would simply copy their responses. The results indicated that the responses were not identical suggesting that within mode

participants were making distinctions between focus phrases. It was also confirmed that the responses in the two modes were similar but not identical. Participants were not merely replicating their responses from one mode to another but were making some interesting distinctions. However, there was sufficient similarity across modes to suggest that participants were accessing the same schema. In other words, participants appeared to have a stable schema for the construct across mode.

The experience of forgiveness in the role of forgiver and forgiven gave some indication whether people did have a forgiveness schema in place (Droll, 1984; Azar, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, 1999), that is a mental representation of a prototype of forgiveness; one which arose out of their personal experience of forgiving and being forgiven. Thus individuals were asked to recall a real-life event and to bear it in mind as they responded to the forgiveness items.

The third study provided confirmation of the previous studies. There was a significant difference between the forgiver and forgiven modes in the participants' response to the focus phrases. Participants do not appear to operate a separate schema for each mode; rather they have one schema which provides a global understanding of the construct. However, their different responses to the focus phrases between modes suggests that they identify specific needs according to role. There is a great emphasis in the literature on the role of the forgiver to the detriment of the forgiven. This can give the impression that the forgiver role is paramount, it is *this* role which defines what forgiveness *is* and *is not*. In reality the roles may be equal in value and importance with the forgiven role also defining the parameters of forgiveness. Perhaps forgiveness without reconciliation seems inadequate precisely because it fails to encompass an important goal of a forgiveness strategy, that is the repair of a relationship. Healing and relationship repair may be mutually dependent in the sense that without healing relationship repair may not proceed.

The results of Study 3 indicate that the overwhelming majority of participants had a personal experience of acting in the role of the forgiver and forgiven. It would seem that forgiveness is a familiar part of interpersonal relations, at least for this particular population.

It may be that an important factor, which distinguishes between clients involved in forgiveness therapy from non-clients, is their lack of experience of forgiveness as an interpersonal strategy in close, communal relationships. The componential approach may



help to highlight where the cognitive representation of the construct differs between those in therapy and the general population.

The finding that the participants were able to focus on a personal experience as both a forgiver and a forgiven perhaps indicates some interaction between the two. In most previous studies participants were asked to recall only an event when they were hurt, i.e., when they forgave an offender not when they were forgiven. It is possible that people may learn to forgive by first being forgiven. As a consequence, the almost exclusive emphasis on the forgiver is a mistaken one. Enright, Freedman, and Rique (1998) acknowledged, "The exclusive focus on the forgiver's benefits" during the last ten years of research (p. 59). To combat this they suggested, "We suggest a focus not only on a forgiver's psychological benefits but on the forgiven's benefits as well." (p. 59).

Perhaps the time has come to adopt a more integrated approach so that it is possible to understand how a person operates in both roles. Girard and Mullet (1997) regarded the forgiveness schema as additive in the way information is integrated. If this is the case it may account for the similarity between the two modes. On the other hand, the modes are not identical and it is important to identify differences as well as similarities in order to understand how people function as both forgiver and forgiven.

## Religion and gender

### Religion.

The findings of other researchers that religious belief did not play a significant role in forgiveness were replicated in this thesis. As Azar, Mullet, and Vinsonneau (1999) commented concerning their study of Lebanese Christians, the religious community factor was not important. Perhaps the historical identification of forgiveness with religion is not a useful one in psychological studies. One problem is differentiating between religious and nonreligious respondents. It may be that current measures of religiosity do not distinguish adequately between the conventionally religious and the genuinely devout e.g., measures of church attendance may include both groups. The inclusion of a Religious component was an attempt to make this distinction.

Apart from the expected correlations between the religious variables and the religious component, there was no significant relationship between the religious variables and the components. Other studies using self-report measures have found that religious individuals do value forgiving more than nonreligious individuals and feel that they should



do so (Shoemaker & Bolt, 1977; Poloma & Gallup, 1991). However, McCullough and Worthington (1999) in their review of religion and forgiveness claimed that while there were “robust and positive associations found between religious involvement and dispositional measures of forgiveness” studies which used self-reports of forgiveness for specific transgressions (Subkoviak et al. 1995) “suggests that the influence of religious involvement is negligible.” (p. 1150) This thesis is concerned not with whether religious and non-religious people’s reported attitude towards forgiveness matches their actual behaviour but if they share a common understanding of forgiveness. In other words, whether the cognitive representation of forgiveness is shared, irrespective of reported religiosity. The results suggest this may be the case. In other words, both religious and nonreligious individuals access the same components of forgiveness.

The influence of the components on the process of forgiveness may be determined by other intrapersonal variables such as empathy (McCullough et al. 1998), adopting a “generous attribution style”, (McCullough & Worthington, 1999), feeling guilty and apologising (Meek, Albright, & McMinn, 1995), willingness to listen to the other person (Klein & Lamm, 1996), and social context, whether forgiveness is acceptable and valued within one’s social circle. If, as the results suggest, religious and nonreligious individuals share a common cognitive representation of forgiveness this may be one reason why there are so few significant differences. However, the results do not preclude the possibility that they do differ on the *value* they place on forgiveness *per se*.

The relationship between religion and forgiveness is usually approached by investigating; the value placed on the construct (Shoemaker & Bolt, 1977; Poloma & Gallup, 1991); the relationship between moral reasoning and attitudes to forgiveness (Enright, Santos, & al-Mabuk, 1989); the effect of religious belief on willingness to forgive (Gorsuch & Hao, 1993); or, the effect of the transgression on willingness to forgive (Subkoviak et al. 1995). Azar, Mullet, and Vinsonneau (1999) in their study of propensity to forgive in three Lebanese Christian communities (Catholic, Orthodox, and Maronite) found a proximity factor. Catholics were more likely to forgive a shooter who was a Muslim than the other two groups. However, respondents were willing to forgive members of other religious groups in order to protect the Muslim-Christian dialogue. Participants found it easier to forgive if remorse and apologies were present, especially for the less educated. With all the studies there is the problem of relating self-report data with actual forgiving behaviour. This positive attitude towards willingness to forgive was found in all the studies discussed in this thesis.



However, very few significant differences have been found between religious and nonreligious groups. One explanation may be that the participants grew up in a society which is still based on Christian principles, even if outward religious observance is maintained by only 10-15% of the population. Thus society provides a common acceptance of forgiveness as valued in restoring relationships, providing healing from a transgression, and a new beginning for both parties (social representations theory). In other words, a means and a procedure for dealing with transgressions between dyads are already present in society. Perhaps, if significant differences had been found between religious and nonreligious groups it would have been more difficult to account for than similarities, and have been a suspect finding.

However, it would be expected that differences might be more evident when other world religions are included in research studies. Each world religion has its own distinctive teaching concerning belief in God, the cosmos, their relationship to each other, to humankind, and forgiveness.

There is a tendency in the literature to gloss over these differences and regard their teaching on forgiveness as fundamentally the same. This is not the case and such an assumption is not a firm base from which to explore differences in the cognitive representation of forgiveness for members of different faiths. The factor analysis indicated all the religious focus phrases loaded on the Religious component in both modes, with the addition of *wipe the slate clean* and *a new start* in the forgiver mode. If world religions e.g., Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism do share a common understanding of forgiveness (in the abstract) then the composition of the components could be compared across religions. Thus it would be expected that the core components would be universally shared across religious belief. While the non-core components would show the greatest variation. The focus phrases used to access the components would probably have to be recast, and this would certainly be the case for the Religious component. It might be expected, in view of the lack of significant findings between religious and nonreligious individuals in this thesis, other world religions would also indicate no difference between these two groups. However, it is possible that across religions greater similarities would be found between intrinsically religious individuals. In other words, religious individuals, of whatever faith, would place greater value on forgiveness as an interpersonal strategy for dealing with transgressions than non-religious individuals. Thus in Study 6 factor 3 loads on Wade's Positive Behaviour -.62 and the Religious component (FR, .82;FN, .74).



### Gender.

The gender findings are consonant with Azar, Mullet, and Vinsonneau (1999) who discovered that; "The gender of the participant did not appear to be an important factor." (p. 178). It may be that men and women respond similarly to transgressions, whatever their nature. Jamieson (1998) claimed that "A number of authors have argued that differences in the intimacy of men's and women's friendship have been grossly overstated (Walker, 1994; Wright, 1988)" (p. 100). In the case of intimacy Jamieson suggests that 'disclosing intimacy' in women's friendships may have been over exaggerated, and other dimensions of intimacy common to men and women "downplayed". Denton and Martin (1998) go even further, they found that "men were more favorable to the definition and benefits of forgiveness than were women." (p. 287). However, the gender composition in their study may not justify the conclusions they draw. There were a small number of men in the sample and men in social work may be more sympathetic towards forgiveness.

Perhaps the variables, which distinguish between men and women, have yet to be identified; or, gender is not a key factor in an understanding of the construct of forgiveness. There is no reason to assume that men and women hold a different cognitive representation of forgiveness, than they would hold one for other abstract concepts such as love.

There may be an overemphasis in psychology generally on gender differences. Bem (1981) criticised the way society categories behaviour along gender lines and called for an aschematic approach regarding gender. Indeed, this thesis would support the contention that the understanding of forgiveness from a componential perspective is the same for women and men. Looking for gender differences may not be a fruitful area of research.

### Culture

Despite the limitations of the cross-cultural study the results were encouraging. The component profiles did show a shared understanding of the construct between the three cultures. It would appear that within a western, Judeo-Christian tradition people might share a similar schema for the construct.

In terms of the core and non-core components, Healing was the only core component where there were no significant differences between the three groups (British, Greek, and Cypriot). It is possible that the findings for the Relationships component was affected by the rejection of the focus phrase *patch up a broken relationship*. New Beginning has only one significant finding although the British seem to be less in



agreement with Guilt Reduction than the Greek-speaking groups. If the premise is accepted that the core components are learnt in childhood as the child is forgiven by parents/carers/teachers then differences in child-rearing practices might account for these variations.

As far as the non-core components are concerned, only in the forgiven mode for the Religious component are all three groups significantly different, while in the forgiver mode only the British and Cypriots are significantly different. The British record more disagreement with Religious, Legal, and Condoning components, the Cypriots most agreement. It would appear that these components are sensitive to cultural differences.

Research comparing different cultures' understanding of the construct in terms of components is needed. If we can identify which components are held in common, and which are affected by other variables within the culture this would provide a basis for embarking on the forgiveness process. However, the cognitive representation held by communities and nations may be more important because of its implication for the forgiving behaviour of groups in conflict.

### Validity and reliability

The questionnaire was constructed and refined over the course of the studies. It is not meant to be a psychometric test but a means of accessing an individual's understanding of the construct of forgiveness. However, questions of reliability and validity were addressed. The initial studies found a Cronbach Alpha for the complete scale to be .83 for both the forgiver and forgiven modes. The Cronbach Alpha from the factor analysis study indicated an internal reliability of .90 for the full scale, .79 for the forgiver, and .84 for the forgiven scales. Hayes (2000) stated "anything less than +.8 would not really be considered reliable." (p. 99). Thus the reliability of the scale is adequate.

The final study looked at the question of validity and examined the relationship between three measures of forgiveness (the EFI, 1995; Wade (1989); the SFS, the measure developed in this research). At present there seems to be a proliferation of forgiveness measures, and these are principally for use in the area of counselling and therapy. If these tests have high correlations with each other then the proliferation seems unnecessary as they are measuring the same variables. This research found that the subscales of the EFI (1995) and Wade (1989) were highly correlated. Only one Wade subscale, which included religious items, failed to reach high correlations with all the other subscales. The measure developed in this research (SFS) had low correlations with the other two measures,

indicating that it was measuring something different i.e., content, while the other scales measured the process of forgiveness. Thus these findings help to support the concurrent validity of the SFS. In other words, religious items in the Wade scale and the SFS are extracted in the same factor (factor 3), and the same is true of Condoning and Pseudoforgiveness (factor 5).

From the viewpoint of including forgiveness within social psychology, forgiveness measures must now be compared with measures other than clinical ones. Bearing in mind current theories and research, measures of empathy, altruism, attribution, and equity rather than depression, and anxiety, may be more appropriate.

### The Componential Approach Applied to Selecting a Response Strategy for a Damaging Event

Smith and Mackie (2000) stated that social psychologists undertake research to understand specific events or specific individuals and “...to discover *general principles* that explain the behavior of many people in many situations. From those principles will flow an understanding of why behavior occurs and under what conditions.” (p. 27, my italics). These general principles are cognitive representations of knowledge an individual has stored in his or her memory (E. R. Smith, 1998). The purpose of representational research is to identify the way a construct is represented in cognitive structures. Constructs are abstract concepts like “self-esteem” or “forgiveness” and have a causal impact on people’s behaviour, whether it is performance, or opinions. Thus, in order to develop a theory which seeks to explain why people do or do not forgive, and what forgiving involves (the process), questions about the construct must be resolved. Only then can the behavioural dimensions of forgiveness be related to the construct and a theory created which is “general in scope, applying to many people in different settings and times.” (Smith & Mackie, 2000, p. 29). The way forgiveness is represented in cognitive structures determines the choice of strategy an individual will adopt when faced with a damaging event.

### The Forgiveness Triangle

Enright, Freedman, and Rique (1998, p. 59) distinguished between *process* and *outcomes*, the former is a gift to the offender, the latter benefits self and other. However, this omits an understanding of the construct of forgiveness (its cognitive representation) and thus one of the three requirements for a scientific theory (Smith & Mackie, 2000, p. 28). Diagram 13-1



illustrates the relationship between the cognitive representation of the construct, the process, and the outcome.

SELF: Cognitive representation (seven components)

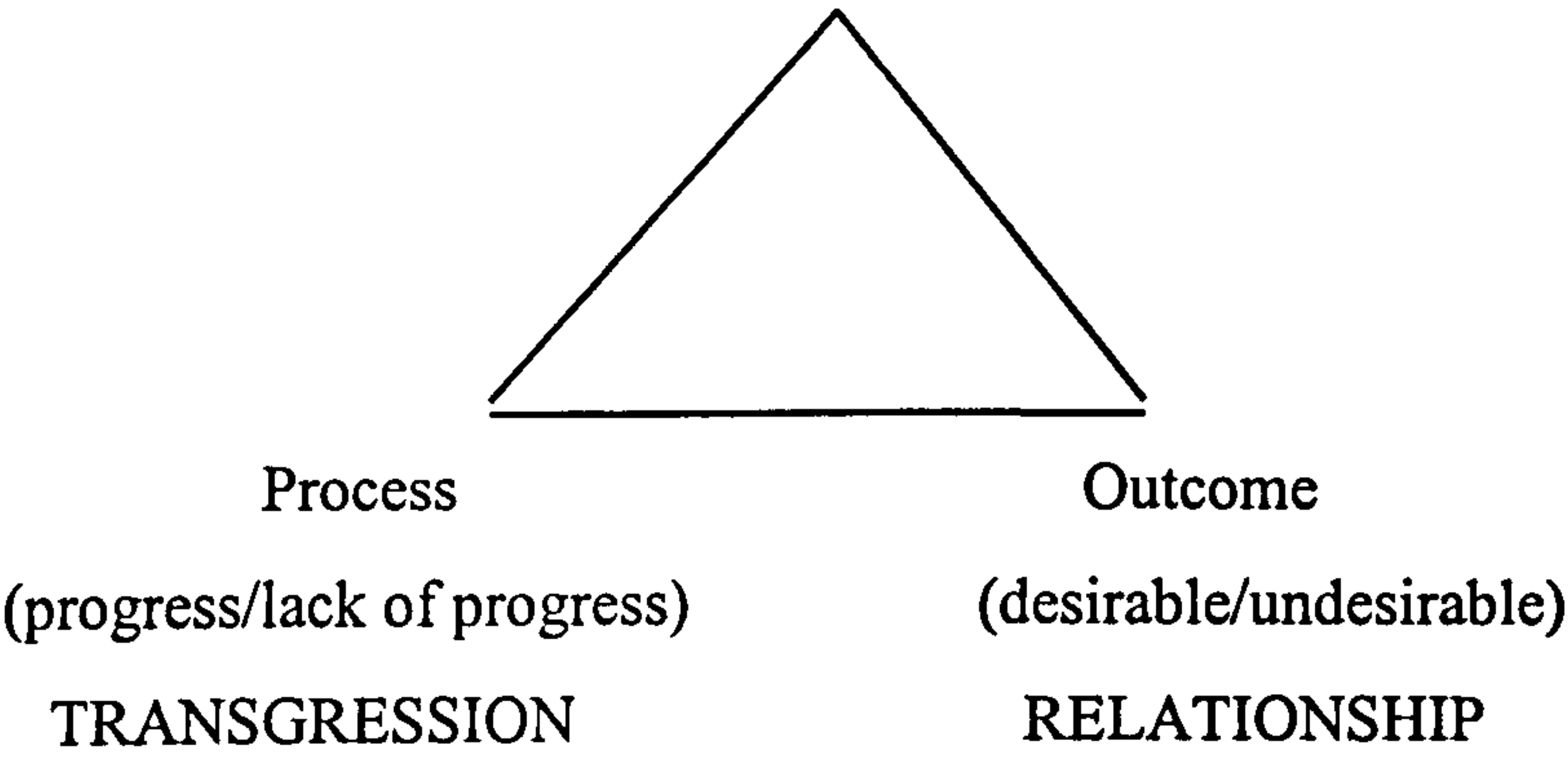


Diagram 13-1. The Forgiveness Triangle

The cognitive representation of the construct will affect both the process of forgiveness and the outcome; this will be the case for both the forgiver and the forgiven mode. The diagram represents a view of forgiveness as a means of repairing a relationship in which all seven components are involved. Duck (1998) states that, “In contrast to much research, where interest has so far focused on development or dissolution of relationships, our major real-life effort in relationships is probably devoted to relationship management and repair.” (p. 79). Although he never uses the term in his books “repair” and “relationship management” involve dealing with degrees of hurt, and forgiveness may be an important management strategy in this context, especially in close, communal relationships. Any strategy for dealing with a damaging event will involve a tri-dimensional unit, the self, the transgression, and the relationship.

SELF⇔TRANSGRESSION⇔RELATIONSHIP

Previous studies tend to isolate these three variables and deal with them as separate units. However, the components may interact with all three variables and individuals may integrate information in order to decide which response strategy to adopt to a damaging event. In other words, the information may be additive (Azar, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, 1999, p. 180). The transgression changes both the perception of the self and the relationship. In

addition, the type of relationship may also affect the way a transgression is perceived in terms of severity and guilt. In Study 6 the type of relationship affected the profile of the components and generally participants showed more agreement for parent scenarios.

### Damaging Events: Choosing a Response and the Components of Forgiveness

The diagrammatic representation of the perception of a damaging event to the process of forgiveness (p. 99) can now be further clarified. In the diagram there is a point (A5 box) which has input from two sources, either an appropriate apology has not been forthcoming and an event has escalated in importance. Or, there has been severe or very severe damage, which requires a response. Both experiences may involve physical or psychological damage, or both. The person has to make a response and various alternatives present themselves. If forgiveness is part of a person's world-view i.e., they are a forgiving person, or if the alternatives have been tried and found to be unsatisfactory, forgiveness may be considered. In the latter scenario a person will access their cognitive representation of forgiveness and match it to the tri-dimensional unit (self-transgression-relationship).

The Healing component has been shown to account for the greatest amount of variance in the factor analysis. The healing is first required for the self, so focus phrases *no longer hurting* and *broken wounds healed* receive high loadings. Next, for the guilt associated with the transgression (*set free from guilt*) even those abused or rape victims feel some responsibility and guilt for what happened to them. Lastly, the healing deals with the negative affect which is being experienced (*cease to feel resentment*). For the cross-cultural study the Greek-speaking groups regarded healing as involving being set free from the transgression (*as if it never happened, amnesty, pardon*) and resentment. Only the Greek-speaking sample includes a religious imperative, *we must forgive our enemies if we ourselves expect forgiveness*. In a religiously orientated population the healing may be part of religious practice e.g., confession and absolution. At this point the offended may weigh up the costs and rewards of proceeding.

If forgiveness is equated with condoning, or if to forgive would be perceived as condoning, (the offender has offered no acceptable apology, acknowledged no responsibility, or made no conciliatory gestures) then other strategies may seem more appropriate. Thus the offended may choose retribution or revenge. Alternatively they may decide to re-interpret the event or their part in it so that they can ignore, turn a blind eye, or overlook the transgression. In other words, condoning becomes an alternative strategy



where forgiving is impossible and revenge is too emotionally exhausting. Perhaps often expressed as “letting someone get away with it.”

If healing seems to be viable so that the ‘self’ part of the tri-dimensional unit has been dealt with then the repair of the relationship can be considered. Respondents did distinguish between the three Relationships focus phrases and the highest loading was on *restore a broken relationship* followed by *patch up a broken relationship*. The phrase *kiss and make-up* received a lower loading along with *a new start*. However, while the Greek-speaking group agreed with *restore...* there was a very low loading for *patch...* It did load in both modes on the Condoning factor so this group interpreted *patch* in a negative way. An important part of restoring the relationship for the Greek-speaking group was *a new start* and healing (*broken wounds...*). A damaging event changes relationships and there are different degrees to which they can be repaired which is reflected in the focus phrases.

It was found that four components seemed to cluster, these were Healing, Relationships, Guilt Reduction, and New Beginning. These components refer to all three dimensions, the relationship, the transgression, and self. Although they are correlated they are also identifiable as separate components. The New Beginning for the British population involves positive feelings, so that actions like shaking hands, kiss and make-up enable a person to feel better about themselves and put the past behind them. This seems to be person-centred which may account for the British high agreement scores on the Relationships component. However, the Greek culture sees a new beginning in terms of the transgression. Actions which deal with the transgression (*ignoring, amnesty, pardon, overlooking*) enable one to make a new start. This distinction must be tentative but it is possible in making a new beginning an offended person may distinguish between dealing with the effects of the transgression and repairing the relationship with the offender.

Negative affect connected with feelings of guilt have to be overcome before there can be any new beginning. The degree to which a person experiences guilt will depend on various factors including their control-related beliefs. For the British sample the highest loading was on *cease to feel resentment* and the mechanism for achieving this is to set the other free, pardon or acquit them. The Greek-speaking population responses loaded highest on *love keeps no record of wrongs*. Dealing with feelings of guilt may have a more religiously orientated response for this group. The relationship is restored (*kiss and make-up*) and the transgression is overlooked, *as if it never happened*. To deal effectively with guilt a person has to address his or her own negative affect (resentment). This may be done



as the transgression is pardoned and may involve positive affect being expressed for the transgressor.

The components above have been dealt with in a sequential manner but in everyday life they may be considered in an elemental or holistic way. As a person considers the transgression, the offender and the relationship certain components may influence their initial decision making. The first may be whether to take active steps to obtain recompense or to condone (ignore) the event. The next step, if condoning is rejected, would be to count the cost and benefits of denial, revenge, or retribution. This response may be rejected for a number of reasons; it has failed in the past, it is too costly, it conflicts with the person's self-image or beliefs. If forgiveness is considered then a person has to decide what are the costs and benefits. The components identify both the costs and benefits. Healing and Relationships would be benefits but in order to achieve these there must be a release from guilt and a new beginning. In other words, the post-transgression experience must in some way resemble, or be better than, the pre-transgression state. Both Guilt Reduction and New Beginning have benefits but clearly involve the victim in accepting certain costs i.e., offering forgiveness without necessarily receiving a "co-operative response".

The idea of justice within a relationship means that members of dyads will be aware of their right to recompense. However, this moral right does not fit with forgiveness, it cannot be rejected because this would conflict with one's sense of justice, but neither can it be enforced. This might account for the high neutral response rate. The role of religious belief is complex. While the Legal component may not involve positive or negative affect, this may not be true of the Religious component. If someone is highly committed to their faith religious belief may have a global influence on the other variables. Hence the Legal and Religious variables were not correlated with the other variables, but for different reasons than those for Condoning.

If the forgiver and the forgiven have the same cognitive representation of forgiveness then the offender's decision to seek forgiveness may follow the same kind of pattern as that for the offended. Healing and Relationships will be important and cannot be achieved without a New Beginning and Guilt Reduction. They too will be aware that justice demands some recompense and thus they may offer an apology or recompense. If their religious belief values forgiveness they may decide to take the first step. Or, if they equate forgiveness with condoning they may well reject it and adopt a re-interpretation strategy, "I really did nothing wrong."



For the sake of simplicity the decision making (see A5) is seen solely in terms of the person making the decision. However, in reality all relational decisions are taken before an audience. This may consist of family and friends as well as the wider expectations of society. This point will be further elaborated in the review of the limitations of the thesis.

## Theoretical Implications

### The Components of Forgiveness and Balance Theory

Borrowing from Heider's (1946, 1958) balance theory when a transgression takes place there is imbalance and the offended person has to decide first whether to restore the balance or harmony between the self and the relationship. In a forgiveness situation balance is fully restored when all the components of forgiveness are "resting". In other words, the individual is no longer concerned with feelings of guilt, locked into the past (rehearsal), or mourning the loss of a relationship. An understanding of the cognitive representation of forgiveness i.e., the components, contributes to an understanding of how balance is achieved and the relationship repaired. By identifying the forgiveness triangle (cognitive representation (7 components)-process-outcome) and linking it to the balance management of relationships it is clear that forgiveness is a learnt interpersonal strategy.

### The Componential Approach and Current Models of Forgiveness

The psychotherapeutic perspective has influenced the whole direction of forgiveness research, rather as the Asch-Heider perspective influenced the direction taken by person perception research. It has led, until recently, to too great an emphasis being placed on the intrapersonal effects of forgiving. This emphasis on the forgiver is evidenced in current research looking at attributional constructs and the relationship of empathy in forgiveness (McCullough, Sandage, Brown, Rachal, Worthington, & Hight, 1998).

### The stage model of forgiveness.

Previous models of forgiveness are principally concerned with the process of forgiveness. For example, the stage model (Enright and the Human Development Study Group, 1996) looks at forgiveness in an evolutionary way based on Kohlberg's framework with six stages from retributational forgiveness to intrinsic forgiveness. It might be possible to expand this model by introducing the components and showing how their weighting changes with each stage. In the studies in this thesis the components have all been given

equal weighting. It is to be expected that the profile of the components would be different for each of the six stages.

#### The process model of forgiveness.

This model has been expanded since its first appearance (Enright and the Human Development Study Group, 1991). The units are now grouped under four main headings: an uncovering phase, a decision phase, a work phase and a deepening phase (Enright & Coyle, 1998). It is based on the perception of forgiveness as overcoming negative resentment and replacing negative affect by positive feelings of love. It is assumed the participants in studies will also adopt this view of forgiveness. An analysis of the individual's understanding of forgiveness using the components would give an independent indication of the influence of the therapeutic process. Individual's understanding of forgiveness could be tested before and after completing the units to identify how the profile of the components are affected by undertaking the units. If in fact they need to complete all the units for changes in the cognitive representation of forgiveness, with later units only affecting willingness to offer forgiveness. In addition, this information might allow the therapist or counsellor to identify misunderstandings about the nature of forgiveness, which could facilitate a forgiveness choice when faced with future damaging behaviour.

#### The two-stage model of forgiveness.

Hargrave's (Hargrave, 1994; Hargrave & Sells, 1997) model deals with the problems of pain experienced after damaging relational experiences in the family when love and trust are violated. His model describes four stations of forgiveness under two broad categories, exonerating and forgiving. Under the heading of exonerating is insight and understanding, and forgiving is divided into opportunity for compensation and the overt act of forgiving. Exonerating deals with understanding why the transgression happened and identifying with the offender. Hargrave in fact is dealing with the tri-dimensional unit - self-transgression-relationship. He places *giving the opportunity for compensation* before the process of forgiveness. If an apology, restitution/changed behaviour is offered to the victim then it is easier for them to forgive (Azar, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, 1999, p. 180). Other researchers do not make this assumption; in fact the forgiver is to forgive without expecting anything from the offender. However, if the final goal is to forgive sometime during the insight/understanding stations an individual's cognitive representation of the construct has



to be examined. In certain circumstances the experiences of the individual may have distorted their cognitive representation of forgiveness. For example, in extreme abuse situations a person may have had little experience of forgiveness. In order to be able to embark on the process of forgiveness it is important that an individual has a full understanding of the construct forgiveness.

#### The Pyramid Model of Forgiveness (Worthington, Jr., 1998).

This was originally called the Empathy-Humility-Commitment Model (McCullough & Worthington, 1995; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Worthington, 1998). During counselling a *state of empathy* is induced and at the same time *extinction* of the fear response to the conditioned stimulus i.e., the offender. The emphasis is on encouraging feelings of empathy so that an individual will embark on the process of forgiveness. However, what change, if any, does inducing empathy have on the person's cognitive representation of forgiveness? It is likely to cause the individual to focus on the needs and feelings of the other person. As a consequence, those components which are concerned with the other person e.g., restoring a broken relationship, a new beginning, and possibly feelings of guilt will be made salient.

#### The coping model (Pargament & Rye, 1998).

Pargament and Rye (1998) propose a model of forgiveness, which regards the construct as a means of coping with "stressors" (p. 62) including abuse, betrayal and victimisation. Through forgiveness an individual changes the focus of attention from protecting the self to pursuing peace, peace of mind (self; the possibility of healing old wounds) and peace with others (the possibility of improving relationships with others in the future). They suggest that once an individual adopts forgiveness as a method of coping which is a radical change in their life, it can become "relatively automatic" (p. 64). The authors regard religion as empowering forgiveness. Regrettably this disempowers a great many people who are either agnostic, atheists or belong to traditions which may not give forgiveness such a central place as Christianity. Again, this perspective views forgiveness as primarily an intrapersonal strategy and is part of the Health Model and Christian Model of forgiveness. In order to obtain "peace" it is necessary to identify areas in which the individual is not at peace.

How does coping affect the components of forgiveness? The main influence would be on the Condoning component. It has been suggested that one way of dealing with a

damaging event and retaining the relationship is condoning. It provides a short-term solution and possibly the breathing space could be seen as a “peace”, albeit an incomplete one. The danger is when Condoning does become an automatic response to negative events; about a quarter of participants in studies in this thesis did agree that Condoning was part of their understanding of forgiveness, for these people condoning may provide a coping strategy for negative events.

The anger model (Fitzgibbons, 1998).

Fitzgibbons (1998) stated, “Without a doubt the primary function of forgiveness is to help an individual gain control over anger and resolve it in an appropriate manner.” (p. 72). This of course is another comment based on experience in a counselling situation where it may well be appropriate. However, it may not be applicable to the general population who have to deal with a range of transgressions in which anger may not be the only response e.g., disappointment, sadness. If the emphasis is placed squarely on the forgiver and the process of forgiveness and the two-way interaction ignored then there is a danger of adopting a simplistic, unidimensional (reductionist view) of the construct. The components of forgiveness reveal a complex cognitive representation for forgiveness. In contrast, anger is initially a post-transgressional response and as such belongs to the process of forgiveness. Anger may not be included within the cognitive representation of the construct. This is an example of the importance of identifying the difference between content and process and keeping them separate.

Condoning.

None of the models incorporate condoning but this component does appear to be part of the understanding of the construct. Somewhere in the process of forgiveness the problem of condoning has to be addressed. Simply drawing people’s attention to the distinction between condoning and forgiveness may not be sufficient. Condoning may be an important first step in being able to change one’s view of the person, the transgression and self. It is the componential approach which enables condoning and other important variables to be included in the psychology of forgiveness.

Why people forgive may be influenced by the cognitive representation that they have of forgiveness. For example, if a person confuses forgiveness and condoning and does not wish to encourage a repetition of the damaging event then they may be unwilling to consider a forgiveness strategy.



Explaining the Interaction Between the Modes of Forgiveness

This thesis has demonstrated in all the studies that when a person responds in the role of forgiver or forgiven they appear to be accessing the same representational construct (or schema) for their understanding of forgiveness. How can this be explained? It is possible that an important part of acquiring a cognitive representation of forgiveness is acquiring the language of forgiveness, “I am sorry.” In other words, actually asking for and being forgiven, the experience of what it feels like to be forgiven (reduction of negative feelings such as guilt, restoration of a valued relationship, feeling positive towards self, and other people) may be the way an individual acquires an understanding of the construct. The overemphasis on the forgiver has masked the importance of the forgiven role. The findings of this thesis indicate that there is much in common between the roles. Their similarity may be the result of the forgiven role informing the forgiver role. Table 13-1 suggests the components which involve interaction between the modes, and those which do not. The whole area of the relationship between the forgiver and forgiven role needs further investigation.

Table 13-1.

The Interaction Between the Forgiver and Forgiven Modes for the Components of Forgiveness

Component	Mode
Healing	FR   FN   no interaction
Relationships	FR $\Leftrightarrow$ FN   interaction
Guilt Reduction	FR   FN   no interaction
Condoning	FR $\Rightarrow$ FN   one-way
New Beginning	FR $\Leftrightarrow$ FN   interaction
Religious	FR $\Rightarrow$ FN   one-way
Legal	FR $\Rightarrow$ FN   one-way

For the Healing component the individual may concentrate on their own needs for healing with no interaction between modes. The forgiver wishes to be healed from the

negative effects of the transgression and the betrayal by the other. The forgiven from effects of behaving in a socially unacceptable way. However, for the Relationships component to be effective the dyads have to interact. Forgiveness clearly becomes a two-way process.

Guilt Reduction like Healing is intrapersonal, dealing with one's own negative feelings. While Condoning is the sole domain of the victim, and if ignored or overlooked, then in effect a transgression has not taken place so the offender is not involved. They have done nothing wrong.

New Beginning may be similar to the Relationships component involving letting go of the past in order to make a fresh start and involves an interaction between the dyads. The Religious component seems to be the one which involves the forgiver offering forgiveness to the offender without requiring anything in return (North, 1987).

Finally, the Legal component focuses on the role of the forgiven as one for whom the just punishment is waived. Unlike the Religious component where the forgiver follows the teaching of an external authority (God, the Church, etc.,) the Legal component may have no external legitimising body. Table 13-1 indicates some of the similarities and differences in function of the components in the different modes. The explanation is not exhaustive, for example, it is assumed that the offender is available and interaction is possible. If the offender is dead or absent then no social interaction will be possible and under these circumstances forgiveness may be less meaningful, especially in terms of interpersonal relations.

The offender has to work through a similar process as that outlined for the offended. If they ask for forgiveness the cost of doing this must be weighed against the benefits. Healing is important, perhaps to overcome the negative effects of performing a socially undesirable act and being set free from guilt. Condoning (ignoring) is unsatisfactory because it may leave the offended with a sense of guilt and the relationship still damaged.

### Conclusion

If a person has not had the experience of being forgiven then this may be the reason why it is so difficult for them to forgive (Fitzgibbons, 1986, no parental modelling, p. 632). Learning about forgiveness through intervention programmes may be a useful educational exercise. It would be interesting to compare the cognitive representation of forgiveness



between those individuals who learnt forgiveness by being forgiven, and those who learnt through intervention programmes. This approach would, of course, give an entirely different emphasis to the construct to the one adopted in the literature at present. It is necessary to take a new look at the cognitive representation of forgiveness and clearly distinguish between it and how individuals translate that understanding into willingness to forgive in the abstract (i.e., questionnaires, laboratory), and forgivingness behaviour between dyads in real life.

Forgiveness education or therapy is not the way that most individuals learn about forgiveness in interpersonal relationships. It is from their every day experience that they create a cognitive representation, which in part determines their response to subsequent damaging events. However, the cognitive representation may also be continually modified by the experiences of acting in the role of forgiver or one forgiven. These are the kind of areas which need to be explored in the future so that the process of forgiveness is not standing alone but tied into a person's cognitive representation of the construct and their experience with family, friends, the workplace, and their particular culture and community.

## CHAPTER 14

### CONCLUSION

*We read that we ought to forgive our enemies; but we do not read that we ought to forgive our friends.* (Cosimo de Medici, 1389-1464, Apophthegms, p. 206).

The purpose of the studies conducted in this thesis was to explore the construct of forgiveness. In order to do this two aims were identified. First, to confirm the multidimensional character of the construct. Second, to make a distinction between the content and process of forgiveness. In order to achieve the stated purpose and aims three objectives were identified: (i) to identify the components of forgiveness; (ii) to discriminate between the forgiver and forgiven modes; and (iii) to identify the variables which influence the components. The major findings of this investigation which fulfil the above will be discussed. The limitations of the studies will be reviewed. Finally, suggestions will be made for future research building on the work of this thesis.

### Main Findings

#### Components

The components have been shown to be robust. In both studies, which conducted a factor analysis, the same seven components were identified in both the forgiver and forgiven mode. The picture, which emerges from the studies, is of a multi-dimensional construct composed of seven components which is common to participants, at least in these studies, regardless of gender and degree of religiosity. Therefore, the construct provides a theoretical framework for exploring individuals' cognitive representation of the construct manipulating macro variables such as cultural similarities and differences, and micro variables in the field of relationships, especially those between dyads. The fact that the



same components are accessed when a person is acting in the role of forgiver and forgiven provides a more accurate understanding of the construct and one which has ecological validity.

Two findings related to the relationships between the components. The first is a general or global finding and the other is specific. The global finding was that in some studies the components formed two distinct groups, which were labelled core and non-core components. The former were correlated and seemed to cluster together. The latter were not correlated and seemed to act in a more independent way. This supports the idea that forgiveness is a complex construct with certain components held in common while the others are more sensitive to the influence of social variables such as culture and religious beliefs. The second finding was that the profile of components differed according to two independent variables, type of transgression and type of relationship.

The research indicates that the emphasis on each component seems to vary in terms of the scenario and is influenced by the culture. The SFS as a measure of an individual's understanding of forgiveness can be used in studies investigating how people respond to specific situations and their general understanding of the construct. In other words, it is now possible to investigate cognitive representations of forgiveness by means of exploring the individual's forgiveness schema. It should be possible to identify the presence or absence of components in different populations e.g., children, a clinical population, victims of abuse, non-western cultures, and religions. In so far as components are absent then an individual may not have a complete understanding of forgiveness and might benefit from forgiveness education. In other instances additional components may be identified.

In addition, it should be possible to identify cultural differences. For example, in the British sample *Condoning* and *Legal* were clearly separate factors but this was not the case for the Greek-speaking group. A possible explanation is that where religious belief is widespread and homogenous i.e., one dominant religious tradition, it exerts an influence which is reflected in a greater awareness that punishment is rightfully due but has been foregone. Hence the greater agreement with components concerned specifically with the ignoring or cancelling the punishment for a transgression.

An important feature of the componential approach to an understanding of forgiveness is that it avoids biases and limitations common to the literature. First, it does not assume the primacy of any particular religious tradition; work in the area is often based on the Judeo-Christian tradition. This certainly will make it more amenable to psychology and psychological investigation. Second, it does not reflect any particular theoretical bias



i.e., a Health Model, assuming that forgiveness is primarily for the health benefits which accrue to the forgiver. It has the advantage of clearly separating process with content and providing an objective understanding of the construct. Third, it is comprehensive and takes account of *all* the major contributions to the forgiveness debate and as a consequence it may be more representative of how forgiveness is understood in practice. Finally, it is not a rigid list and is flexible enough to include other components, which may be identified in cross-cultural studies.

The literature majors on the forgiver and therefore on the process of giving forgiveness and fails to take into account (i) the interaction of the dyads (ii) the importance of receiving forgiveness on the transgressor (iii) that the experience in both roles will affect an individual's attitude to forgiveness. The advantage of the approach adopted in this thesis is that differences and similarities between the two roles can be identified and this provides a more complete picture of the relationship between the two roles for an individual. The fact that the same schema operated in both modes but with slightly different emphasis in the components was an important discovery.

Finally, the components establish the complexity of the construct and its multi-dimensional character. However, more importantly, the dimensions are empirically identified for the first time.

### Focus Phrases

The focus phrases did reveal differences in response between the two modes, although there was sufficient similarity to support the hypothesis that participants were accessing the same schema. The loadings of variables onto factors provided information about the way people were interpreting phrases; this was not always the kind of interpretation which seemed obvious from the literature. Hence, *as if...* was regarded as condoning, while *shake hands* needed to be replaced by *kiss and make-up* as an indicator of relationship.

The cross-cultural study also revealed different interpretations between the British and Greek-speaking groups. For example, for the British scored higher agreement for: *patch up a broken relationship* while the Greek-speaking groups scored greater disagreement. However, there did not seem to be a bias to extreme responses: the Grand Mean was 2.78 with the means of the British and Greek groups the same ( $M = 2.83$ ) and the Cypriots ( $M = 2.68$ ) slightly lower.



## Mode

In the British study an interesting finding from the higher order factor analysis was the Religious factor in the forgiven mode only, a suggested explanation for this was proposed. However, it does point to the importance of not isolating the two modes. By comparing the modes differences in emphasis can be identified.

## Religiosity and Gender

There were no significant findings for either of these variables. Both men and women share a common schema for the construct. Differences are more likely to emerge when the actual process of forgiveness is undertaken. If the cognitive representation is held in common this may account for the failure to find significant differences for these variables.

## Culture

The important finding was that between the two cultures there was a common cognitive representation of forgiveness and the same seven components were identified in both modes. However, the influence of religion was evident in the higher agreement with the religious focus phrases by the Cypriot group. In addition, the Legal and Condoning components were less clearly differentiated in the Greek-speaking groups compared to the British group; the most religious group (the Cypriot group) indicating greater agreement with condoning focus phrases. Perhaps Condoning is also sensitive to culture and might form two distinct components in some religious cultures. (see page 225).

## Limitations of the Study

Forgiveness research has certain limitations, which are common to much of the work in the field and apply to this thesis in particular. First, the problem of subjects, the size of the population sampled, and the characteristics of the participants. Most of the studies involved a student population. The problem with using an undergraduate population is that it is becoming increasingly middle class with a high proportion of women psychology undergraduates. Some attempt to redress this was made by using a church congregation, which had the advantage of a wider age range. However, the low numbers in the over 25 category meant that no assumptions could be made for the effect of age. Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, and Girard (1998) found that older people were more likely to forgive than younger people. A future study should include young, middle-aged and elderly people in

order to investigate whether the components are significantly different for the various age groups.

Second, the list of components was not intended to be exhaustive. It is possible that with religions other than Christianity additional components would be identified e.g., wisdom. There were no items for revenge or anger, traditionally regarded as the opposites of forgiveness. Perhaps such items should be included to help participants distinguish between forgiveness and non-forgiveness elements. In addition, a future translation of the scale might also include phrases common to the culture being investigated rather than just a translation of the British phrases.

The similarity between the Greek and British groups suggests that cultural differences may not be as obvious as one might expect. Alternatively, university students may have many views in common i.e., most are middle class with a high educational level and live in cities. The effect of the Religious component might be even stronger if a more rural Greek population had been used.

Coleman (1998) highlights the specific bias of those working in the area of forgiveness and points out that unlike other social scientists they regard forgiving as desirable and not “neutral in value” (p. 95). However, it is doubtful whether “unbiased objectivity” is a characteristic of all other social scientists. Smith and Mackie (2000) comment, “Social-psychological research cannot help but be influenced by a researchers’ personal beliefs and cultural values.” (p. 43) However, this thesis did attempt to control bias by including input from all the areas involved in forgiveness and not espousing one particular perspective. Forgiveness was approached as one strategy among many as a response to negative or damaging events.

The event section in the forgiveness measure was used to recall a personal, relative or friend, or fictional event involving giving or receiving forgiveness. McCullough and Worthington (1999) draw attention to possible recall bias. It was assumed that everyone would be equally able to recall damaging events. However, as McCullough and Worthington point out that if religious people are more forgiving of transgressions and find recall of them more difficult, they might have difficulty in recalling a transgression that is suitable for the demands of the research. In contrast the less religious (possibly less forgiving) might have less difficulty. However, the purpose of the event question was not primarily to investigate willingness to forgive a specific transgression but the person’s understanding of forgiveness. Thus this bias may not effect responses to the components of forgiveness.



It could be the position that the components were artefacts of the chosen focus phrases. However, the factor analysis did identify the seven components in both modes, and this was confirmed by the cross-cultural study. Nor did the focus phrases automatically load onto a particular component. Some failed to fit their original component i.e., *as if it never happened* was regarded as condoning rather than a new beginning. Other focus phrases received low agreement responses and were replaced by a phrase more appropriate to the component i.e., *shake hands* replaced by *kiss and make-up* (Relationships). Culture also influenced how a focus phrase was interpreted, *patch up a broken relationship* received consistently high agreement responses from the British group (Relationships) but disagreement from the Greek respondents who associated it with condoning. The results of all the studies give weight to the hypothesis that the construct of forgiveness is composed of components.

The aim of this thesis was to arrive at an understanding of the content of the construct of forgiveness held by the lay person. The findings were encouraging but represented the initial testing of the components. The same criticisms levelled at schema research applies to this thesis. There is no way of proving the components but they do appear to be a helpful way of understanding the construct. Schema theory provides a means of explaining how people categorise and process a complex amount of information quickly and relatively efficiently. In the same way the components of the construct of forgiveness may provide individuals with a means of deciding which particular aspects of forgiveness are salient to them *at the time*.

## Statistics

It was not possible to apply factor analysis to the Greek and Cypriot population separately because of the numbers of participants. However, the comparison between the British and Greek-speaking groups did suggest a similar construct of forgiveness for each group. A replication of the factor analysis with a large sample (500+) composed of different age cohorts should be undertaken. This would also permit an investigation into the relationship between the individual components in both modes. At present, although the components accounted for differing amounts of variance they have been treated as equal in importance.

Path analysis would indicate how the components are related to each other and which were influenced by other variables such as time, type of transgression, severity of outcome, responsibility, intention, type of relationship, power and need for maintenance.



Finally, there is the criticism that “you get out what you put in”, it is possible that the number of focus phrases should be increased to tap the components. Focus phrases may be omitted i.e., *set free* and *set free from guilt* the first one might be an unnecessary repetition. It is possible that focus phrases accessing empathy might be a useful addition. However, empathy may be associated with the process rather than the content of forgiveness.

The number of focus phrases per component could also be re-examined. It is possible that more focus phrases would provide a fuller picture of what constitutes a component. However, 24 focus phrases per mode did seem to be near the limits of endurance for the participants. The analysis also indicated that certain focus phrases could be replaced e.g. *cancel the debt* for *remit the penalty*. Or, they could be used as filler items if they do not load appropriately on the factors.

### Future Research

The focus of forgiveness research has been on adults and how they progressed through the forgiveness process. One area, which has not been tackled, is how children acquire a cognitive representation of forgiveness. Forgiveness may be regarded as developmental. Some studies have found that older people expressed a higher level of willingness to forgive than younger age groups (Enright, Santos, & Al-Mabuk, 1989; Girard & Mullet, 1997; Park & Enright, 1997; Subkoviak et al., 1995; Mullet, Houdbine, & Girard, 1998). However, it is possible that they all share a common cognitive representation of forgiveness, where they differ are on the emphasis they place on each component. In addition, an expressed willingness to forgive may not be matched by actual forgiving behaviour. The first step would be to investigate a child's components of forgiveness and establish if they differ radically from adults. Children may have access to the same components but only differ in the degree to which they have experienced damaging events and had to forgive others. It might then be possible to include forgiveness education within Circle Time in primary schools and in social and moral education in secondary schools. The challenge ahead is to discover the means by which the cognitive representation of the construct is acquired and how to access it in children.

Another area for research would be to determine if there is a difference in the components of forgiveness in a clinical and non-clinical sample across age cohorts. Coleman (1998, p. 95) points out that American researchers use clients in their studies. These individuals may be very different from the general population in terms of coping



skills, socio-economic status (they are all middle class because they can afford therapy) and may be more prone to the subjective experience of betrayal. It is important to establish if the components are the same for this group as the general population. Differences might lead to insights into helping clients towards a more useful cognitive representation in interpersonal relations. For example, it may be that those who lack coping skills, or who often feel betrayed, perceive condoning as part of the strategy of forgiveness.

An area where the role of forgiveness is woefully lacking is in the rehabilitation of prisoners. The prisoner and the victim are in a relationship which has gone wrong and damage, often severe, has been inflicted. Dickey (1998) discusses the role of forgiveness in restorative justice in the American justice system. The first step would be to establish the components of forgiveness for a population of convicted and remand prisoners. Forgiveness should not be embarked on without an objective measurement of the content of the construct. Enright, Freedman, and Rique (1998) make a plea for cooperation across disciplines. Forgiveness is not only a complex construct, but also one which inspires negative and positive bias in researchers.

Finally, the whole area of non-Christian cultures has yet to be studied. One thing, which all these proposed areas of future research have in common, is the need to investigate the cognitive representation of forgiveness as a separate field of study from the process of forgiving.

### Conclusion

Whereas similar concepts such as altruism can be explained by terms such as helping behaviour or expecting nothing in return, forgiveness is more complex. It is complex for two reasons. First, its roots lie in divergent disciplines. Second, the construct of forgiveness involves a number of diverse factors. This is the first attempt to unravel the cognitive representation of forgiveness and integrate the contribution from different disciplines. Unless it is clear what people understand by the term there is a danger that clients simply agree with a higher status person (the therapist or counsellor). This will have ramifications for the process of forgiveness. For example, in a counselling situation the client may adopt the therapist's understanding of forgiveness to deal with a specific transgression. However, damaging events tend to recur, in any future damaging events the client may revert to his or her own mental representation, rather than the one provided during therapy.

It is possible that forgiveness research in Europe will develop along different lines to those in the United States in much the same way as European social psychology focuses on people as members of social groups rather than the isolated individual (Abrams & Hogg, 1999, p. 8). This emphasis on the individual characterises forgiveness research in America with an emphasis on counselling and therapy as indicated by the definition cited by Denton and Martin (1998), “an inner process, central to psychotherapy, where the injured person without the request of the other releases those negative feelings and no longer seeks to return hurt, and this process has physical, psychological, and emotional benefits.” (p. 288). In Europe the interest may place forgiveness within social psychology as part of pro-social behaviour, an important strategy for managing relationships, and a means of repairing relationships in conflict which takes into account a range of factors, including environmental ones such as culture.

We live on a shrinking globe. We now talk of world citizens. In all communities the relationships between individuals are constantly under pressure from social, economic, and political factors. Forgiveness may have something to offer at the micro level between dyads and at the macro level between communities and nations. Paul W. Coleman (1998) sums up why forgiveness is an important interpersonal strategy for repairing and maintaining relationships:

Forgiveness is more than a moral imperative, more than a theological dictum. It is the only means, given our humanness and imperfections, to overcome hate and condemnation and proceed with the business of growing and loving. (p. 94).



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## APPENDIX A

### World Religions and Forgiveness

(Chapter 3)



## World Religions and Forgiveness

The following is a brief overview of the place of forgiveness in some world religions.

### Hinduism

References to forgiveness appear in the sacred texts of Hinduism, “forgiveness, truthfulness...are created by Me (Lord Krishna) alone”, and “forgiveness, fortitude...these are the transcendal qualities born of the godly atmosphere.” Forgiveness is listed among moral qualities which are in themselves characteristics of the gods or “transcendental qualities, born of the godly atmosphere” (Prabhupada, 1972, p. 241), again the Bhagavad-Gita teaches that “One should practice tolerance and forgive the minor offenses of others.” (p. 171).

Whether all Hindus could be expected to aspire to these qualities given the caste system is debatable, bearing in mind that a section of society, the Sudras, are outside Hinduism, being unclean. Forgiveness would appear to be a quality limited to the few, specifically the Brahmin caste, and then only the priests. As a religious tenant forgiveness appears to be exclusive and does not constitute a central plank of the Hindu faith. For the Hindu the western emphasis on individualism is alien and this, coupled with their world-view may make their understanding of forgiveness closer to that found in the Hebrew Scriptures. According to Mukerji (1986) Hindus “believe in a community of committed people which is a free association of friends who come together to celebrate each other’s way off seeking God-realization.” (p. 36)

In the Vedic tradition the emphasis is on social harmony rather than personal salvation (*mukti*) or fulfilment. Compassion for one's fellow human beings and creation (*sarvabhutahite ratah*, Bhagavad-Gita, V, 25, XII, 4) is the mark of a fully liberated individual in both the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Brahman sustains all that is and the Hindu seeks to cooperate with the gods to maintain the universe in cosmic harmony. In Hinduism there is no sense of the dualism that can be found in Christianity i.e., between soul and body, Creation, and mankind. The world does not exist in itself, it is a projection of Brahman so that once knowledge of Brahman and self is attained the two are no longer separated but one. The idea of duality has no place in Hinduism.

This struggle for unity with Brahman and cosmic harmony accords with one aspect of forgiveness, namely, that evil or aggression is overcome, not through the exercise of power but by transcending the social order. Gandhi's *satyagraha* (active, non-violent struggle, grounded in truth) is regarded by many Christians as "the most consistent and effective method that has yet been elaborated to practice the politics of forgiveness, implicit in the gospel." (Soares-Prabhu, 1986, p. 63). Mahatma Gandhi (1965) referred to this as "enlightened forgiveness" which he explained, "does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer, but it means putting one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant." (p. 133).

A fundamental question arises whether forgiveness is given from a position of strength or weakness. For Gandhi (1965):

Abstinence (from retaliation) is forgiveness when there is the power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be swallowed by her. (p. 131).

For Soares-Prabhu (1986) power comes to the oppressed when they realise that solidarity is a means of strength and they become aware of their own dignity and historical role in society. This new awareness provides the power base from which they can "authentically" (p. 65) forgive. This active forgiveness (Gandhi's *satyagraha*, an active, non-violent struggle, based on truth) is an effective means of practising political forgiveness and undermining the cycle of violence.

Based on this premise one can only forgive once one's own power base or equality has been established, forgiveness is then offered between equals. This contrasts with the Christian tradition, which may offer forgiveness from a position of weakness. Sobrino (1986, p. 50) recounts the story of how, in a refuge in San Salvador on All Souls day family members made cards with flowers to remember their dead relatives. Among the cards was one with no flowers, and the words, "Our dead enemies, May God forgive them and convert them". The explanation given for the card was that as Christians they should love their enemies as brothers in spite of their persecution. The role of love or *agape* in forgiveness seeks to transform the other person at a cost to the forgiver and invests forgiveness with a gift-like nature. Perhaps *agape* is a factor which distinguishes the Christian concept of forgiveness, precisely because it can be given from a position of weakness, unlike its counterpart in Hinduism.

It would appear that while the term forgiveness is not unique to Christianity, cross cultural research needs to ensure that the philosophical and belief basis of a particular



religion are understood so that the construct is clearly defined in terms which reflects its everyday meaning in a given society. Spong (1991) makes this point in a different context: "Words are always but a human vehicle through which ultimate meaning seeks to find expression. The words cannot be identified with the ultimate meanings." (p. 242).

The danger is that forgiveness will be referenced to Christianity, which itself has difficulty in holding a clear definition of the construct, and it will be assumed that other world religions hold the same understanding. The word may be the same but the underlying elements may have a different emphasis according to a society's cosmological and teleological perspective.

### Buddhism

A similar approach should be adopted in investigating the Buddhist use of forgiveness. Buddhists accept that there are many routes to Buddha's Middle Path. There is debate as to whether there is a God in Buddhism. However, there is a belief in the righteous law which controls the Universe (*Sada dhamma*) which means that a person will reap the fruits of their actions (*kamma*) in the next reincarnation until Nirvana, a state of non-being, is achieved. For a Buddhist forgiveness would be one means of overcoming suffering so that both parties could achieve liberation. Sivaraksa (1986) warned that all religions have two languages (Venerable Buddhadas Bhikkhu) the religious or Dhammic language and the ordinary or worldly language. People tend to mix the languages and this has certainly been the case in Christianity. Buddhism has two distinct languages: Gnosis, the language of liberative knowledge, and agape, the language of redemptive love. Sivaraksa (1986) argued that the two languages shape the way a person perceives and experiences reality. Each language has its own set of rules and the rules of one cannot be applied to the other.

For the gnostic there is the "Impersonal It" and for the agapeic encounter the "Personal Thou": The Buddhist keeps a critical distance from the world, while the Christian is part of the world. The Buddhist views the cosmos as "one ecological community" of which man is an entity. For Christians cosmic forces are impersonal and are to be manipulated in the service of God and man. The dualism of Christianity is not reflected in Buddhism. Thus much of the discussion of the meaning of forgiveness would not be relevant to the world-view of Buddhism, although there would be respect for the relational aspect of forgiveness which would provide a means of overcoming suffering, for both forgiver and forgiven. At present the psychological use of forgiveness within interpersonal relations both on an individual and community level in Buddhism has not been researched.

## Islam

The Koran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over the period CE 610 until his death in CE 632. It is believed to be a transcript of a tablet in heaven and for Muslims it is the infallible word of God. The written version was commissioned between CE 644-56. The Koran proclaims one God, Allah who is All-knowing, Compassionate and Merciful. The duties of a Muslim are faith in Allah and to keep the Five Pillars (belief in One God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage to Mecca). Nasr (1986) identified areas in Christianity of which Islam is critical. The first is the lack a Divine Law or Shariah; the second that its ethics are too sublime for ordinary human beings to fulfil. Injunctions like turning the other cheek are only for saints. There are five verses in the Koran specifically concerned with forgiveness. Again, it is a concept which is not developed but does have a place. One of Allah's attributes is His mercy and willingness to forgive the sinner, while Muslims have a relational duty to forgive fellow Muslims.

In Surah II:263 external practice and an internal response are compared:

*A kind word with forgiveness is better than almsgiving followed by injury. Allah is Absolute, Clement.*

This theme is taken up in Surah III:134:

*...those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loveth the good;*

While Surah 4:17 reflects the Jewish tradition of which Muhammad would have been familiar:

*Forgiveness is only incumbent on Allah toward those who do evil in ignorance (and) then turn quickly (in repentance) to Allah. These are they toward whom Allah relenteth. Allah is ever knower, Wise.*

Forgiveness is only for unintentional sins and conditional upon a speedy repentance. There is no provision for intentional sin, which presumably goes unforgiven. This restrictive view of forgiveness is further reflected in Surah XXIV:18:



*The forgiveness is not for those who do ill deeds until, when death attendeth upon one of them, he saith; Lo! I repent now; nor yet for those who are while they are disbelievers. For such We have prepared a painful doom.*

Forgiveness is limited and specific. The forgiveness of Allah is linked to sexual sins for the man (not the woman) Surah IV:23,25 and to acts of kindness to fellow (male) Muslims.

*And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear not to give to the near of kin and to the needy, and to fugitives for the cause of Allah. Let them forgive and show indulgence. Yearn ye not that Allah may forgive you?*

*Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.: Surah XXIV:22*

These verses would have to be taken alongside other teaching in Islam, especially Jihad, where to kill one's enemies fighting in the cause of Allah results in an immediate translation to Heaven. The central tenant of Islam is submission and obedience to the Will of Allah. In fact the word Islam means submission. Forgiveness in a theological sense is limited to fellow Muslims. The understanding and practice of forgiveness among devout Muslims may differ markedly from devout adherents to other world religions. However, there is at present no research cross culturally which seeks to establish how individuals of different faiths understand and practice the construct of forgiveness. If, as Christians and others claim, forgiveness may play a role at a dyadic, social, and international level the result of such studies might make a positive contribution to understanding between world leaders from diverse religious backgrounds.

### Chinese Religions

Bertrand Russell (1922) claimed that the Chinese were the only people in the world who showed little interest in religion, did not have much to do with religion, and could be regarded as "an irreligious people" (p. 202) This statement is not quite accurate. The Chinese have a philosophical tradition which seeks to give meaning to the cosmos and man's place in it. Confucian tradition does not share the Christian perspective of man as sinful; rather it sees man's nature as essentially good. There is no sharp distinction between the Creator and the created; the task of man is to follow The Way, and the Doctrine of the Mean (Shu-hsien Liu, 1986).

The Chinese religious tradition includes Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese Buddhism and all share a high regard for nature and life in this world. Forgiveness, according to Taoist philosophers can be viewed as one of the artificial human devices used to allow man to develop to his fullest potential, and develop the unity between Heaven and man. According to Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, and Freedman (1992, p. 86) the word *shu* or *shuh* in Confucianism is more general than forgiveness and incorporates aspects of mercy (including altruism) and justice (the golden rule). Chan (1963, as cited in Enright et al., 1992, p. 86) states, "The way of our Master is none other than conscientiousness (*chung*) and altruism (*shu*)" (p. 27). The golden rule is put in the negative, "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire." The idea of forgiveness appears to be linked with morality and justice, and behaving in a way which will not cause injury. The individual is told to recognise the correct way of behaving, but forgiveness is not developed, nor is it a key feature. To establish the use or non-use of forgiveness in Chinese culture one would need to clearly define the construct within the dominant philosophical tradition (cf. Huang, 1990).

#### Implications for Understanding the Construct of Forgiveness

From this religious overview of the place of forgiveness within Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Chinese religions it is evident that the construct is closely tied to the theological view of the cosmos; that is Creation, mankind, and the Unity or Duality which exists between them. Each religion has its own sacred and secular use of the construct and any research will have to take account of these variables. The particular bias of the researcher is another factor, for example, whether a researcher is a member of a particular religion. However, if meaningful research is to be undertaken the construct must be investigated without assuming any particular theological bias on the part of the researcher. This applies within the "Christian" culture of the west, the Hindu culture of India, and countries where Islam is the dominant faith. It is the wording of trigger items (focus phrases or statements) chosen to access the cognitive representation which will need to be appropriate to the culture.

The above discussion suggests that there appears to be a common appreciation of the construct as an interpersonal strategy which is part of altruistic behaviour and results in pro-social actions which benefit the offended, the offender, and the community. It is in investigating the understanding and experience of forgiveness at these levels, individual, relational, and communal, that psychology can contribute to a deeper understanding of forgiveness.



It may be that forgiveness should be included in “folk religion” in the sense that the act of forgiveness affirms that “there are always more things worthy of admiration than of contempt” (Camus, 1973, p. 240). Rubio (1986) suggested that Camus (a non-Christian) has raised the possibility of the “secularization of the Christian virtue of forgiveness” (p. 94). This may be compared with the secularization of other Christian events e.g., Christmas. Secularization involves the separation of an event or concept from its religious association while still retaining its social concomitance. In the secular world forgiveness may be perceived as having value in maintaining specific relationships. In other words, its practical outworking may be more limited than Christian forgiveness. While its meaning may be more general e.g., the construct might include condoning, pardon, forgetting etc. Folk forgiveness might be more akin to pro-social behaviour than any particular religious persuasion and have key features which are common to most societies.

## APPENDIX B

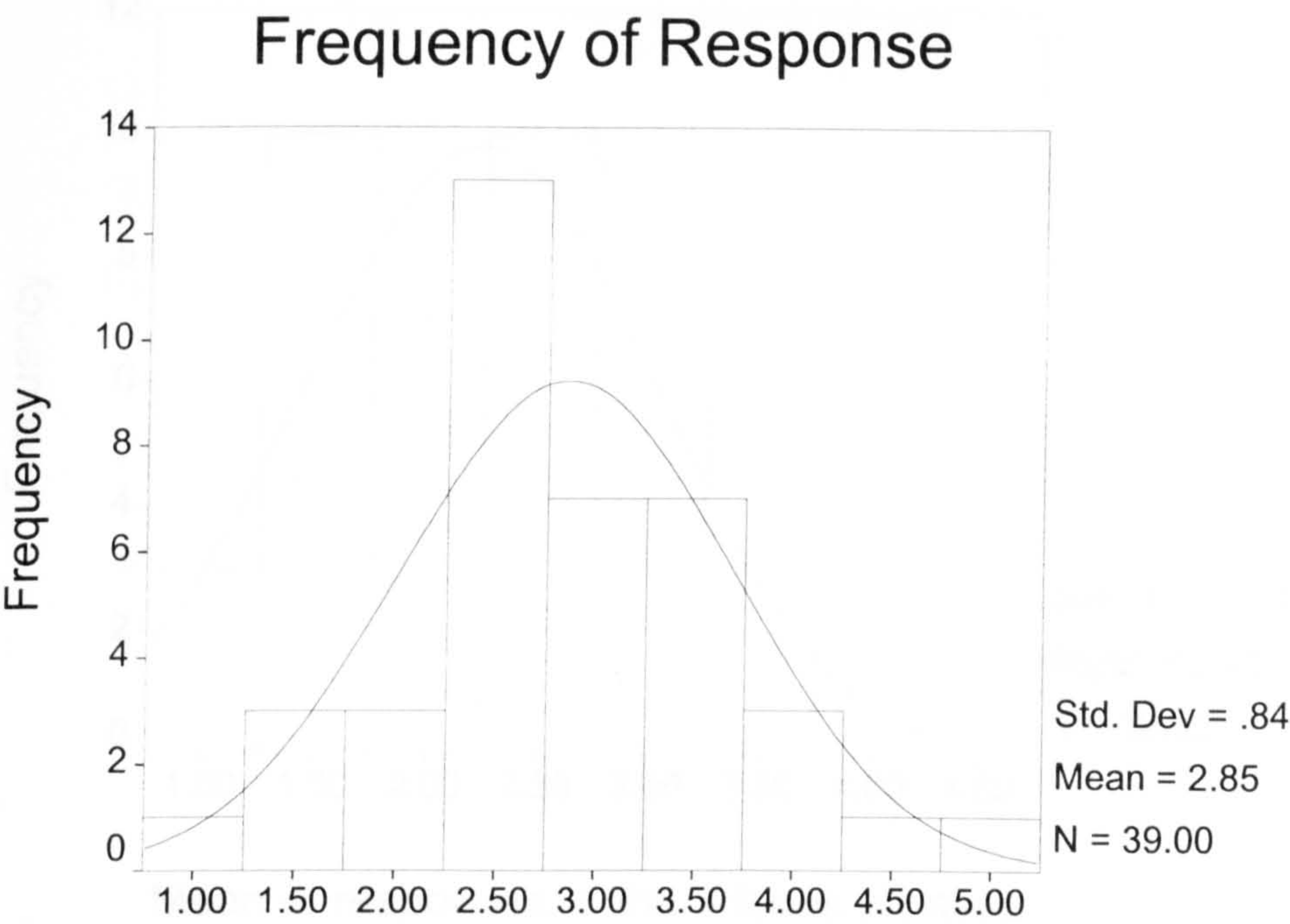
### Study 1

(Chapter 7)



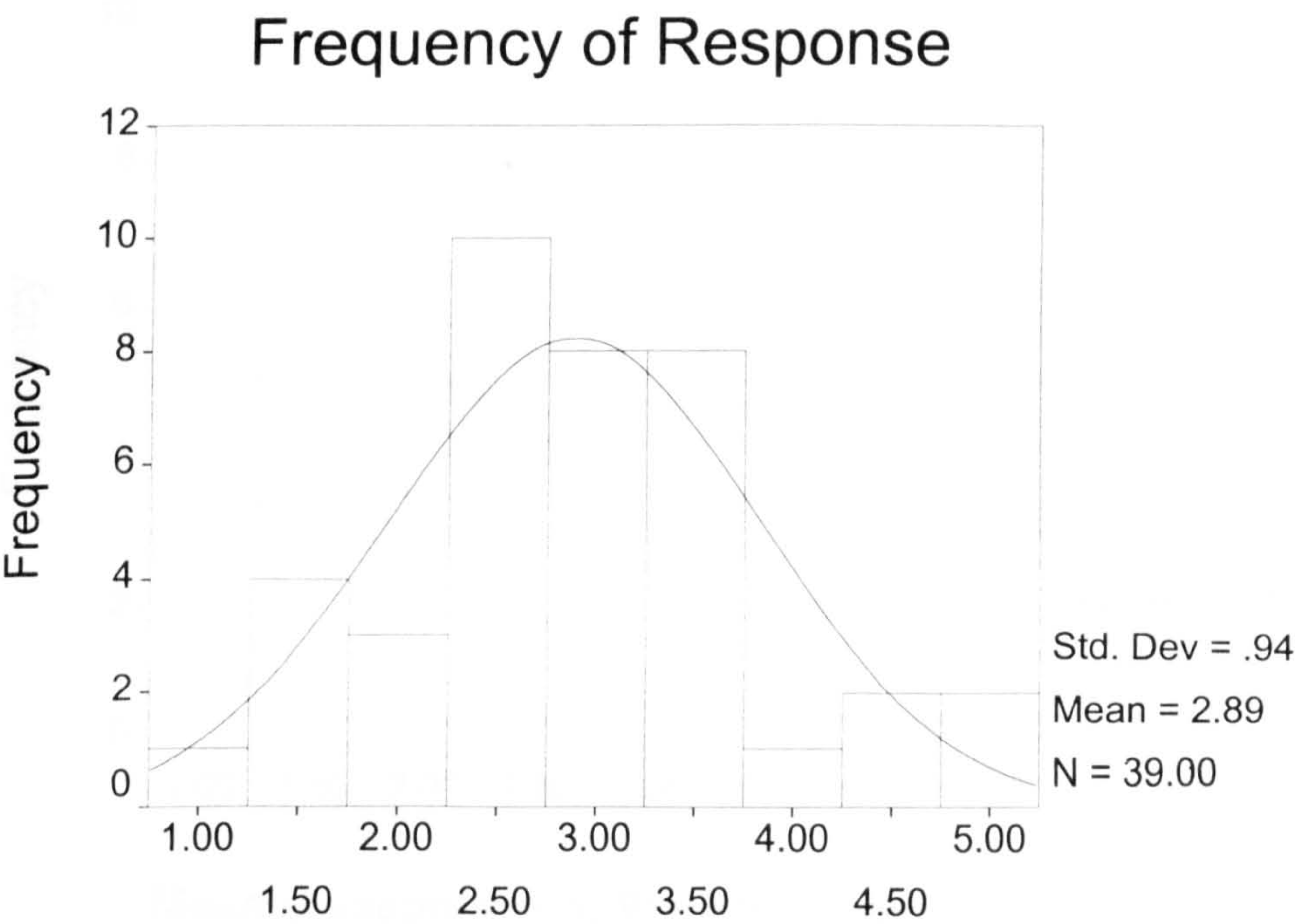
Tables 7-6 (a-h) Histograms of the Components

Table 7-6a. Relationships Component (FR)



Mean of responses to the 3 focus phrases

Table 7-6b. Relationships Component (FN)



Mean of responses to the 3 focus phrases

Table 7-6c. New Beginning Component (FR)

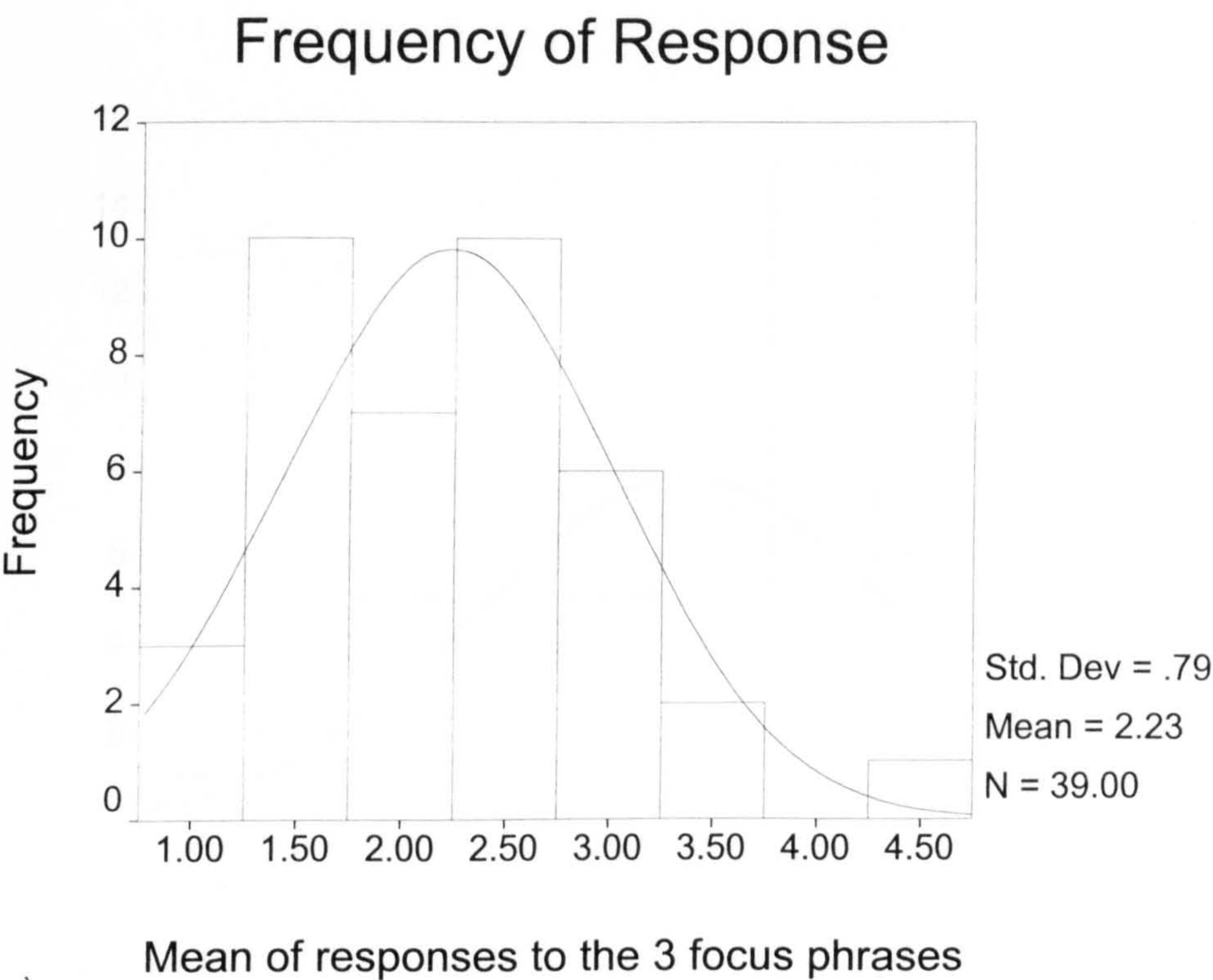


Table 7-6d. New Beginning Component (FN)

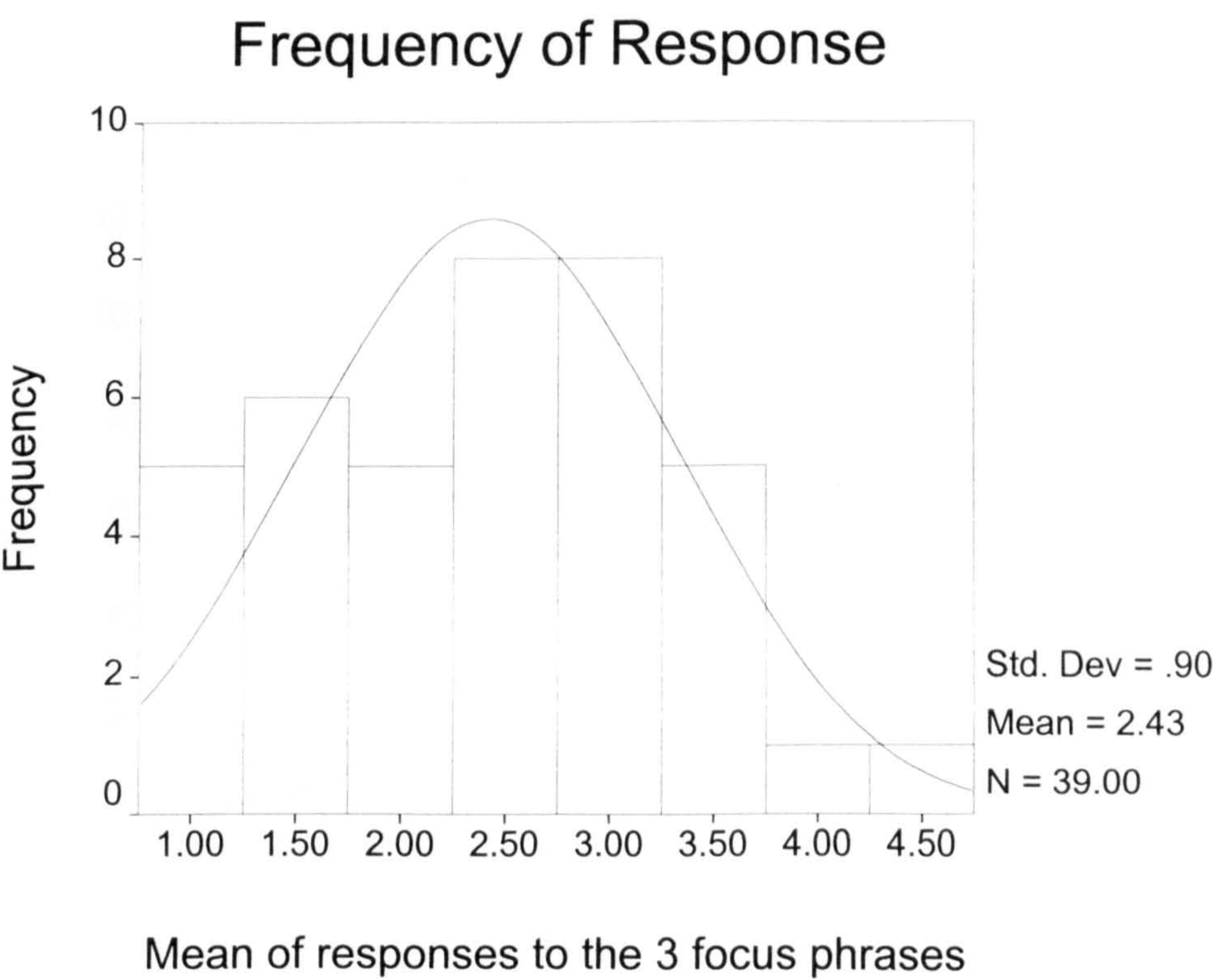
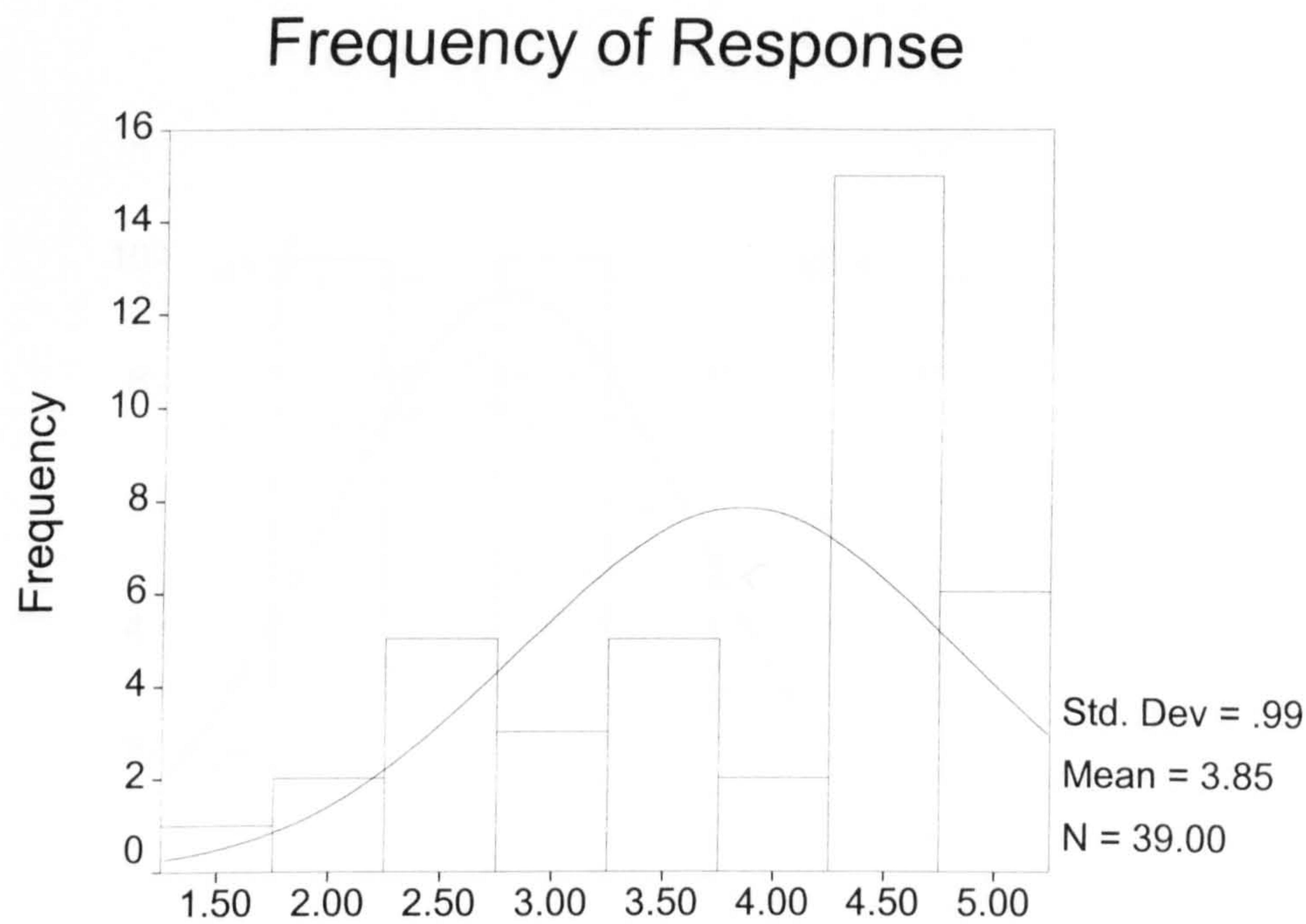


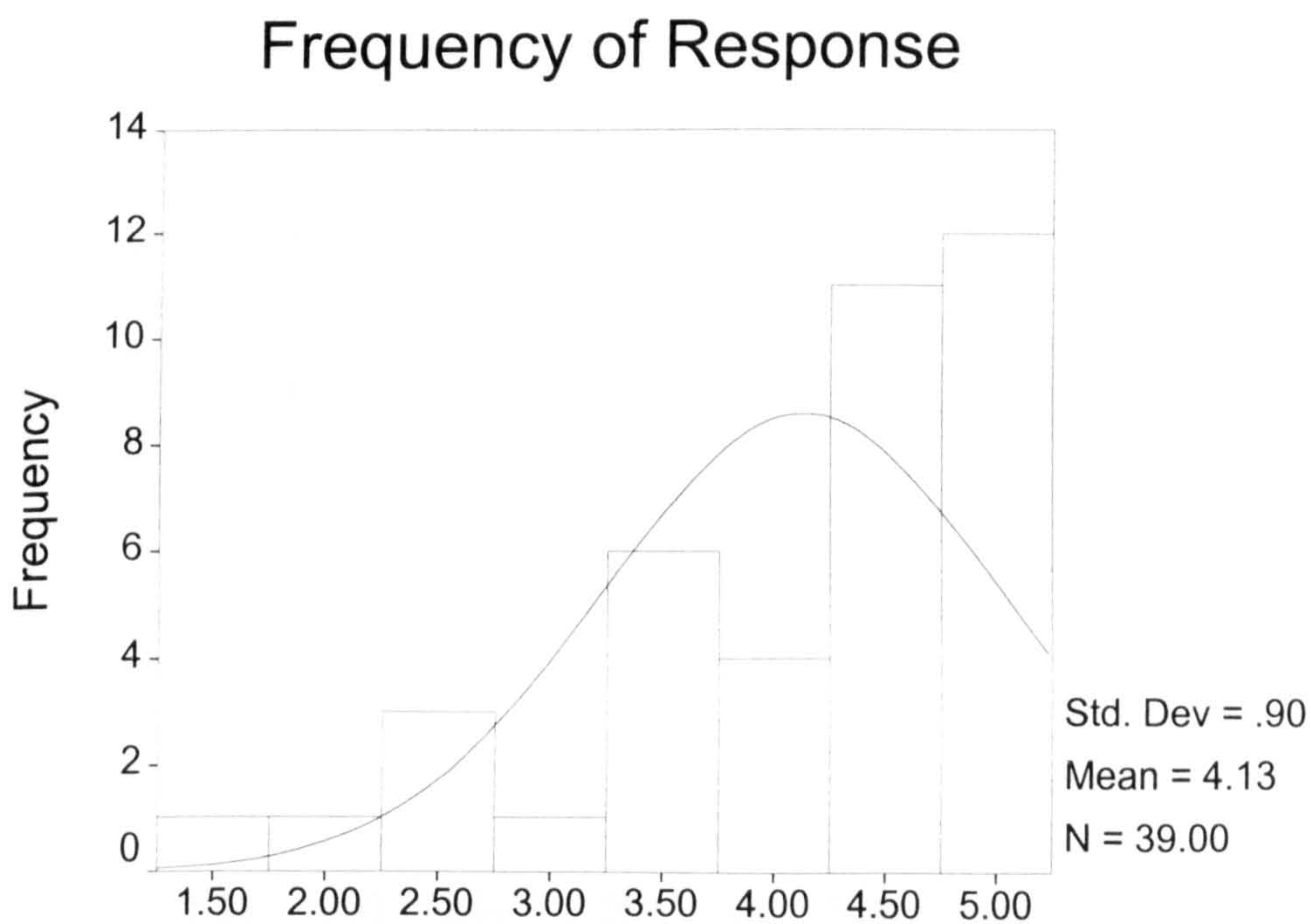


Table 7-6e. Condoning Component (FR)



Mean of responses to the 3 focus phrases

Table 7-6f. Condoning Component (FN)



Mean of responses to the 3 focus phrases

Table 7-6g. Guilt Reduction Component (FR)

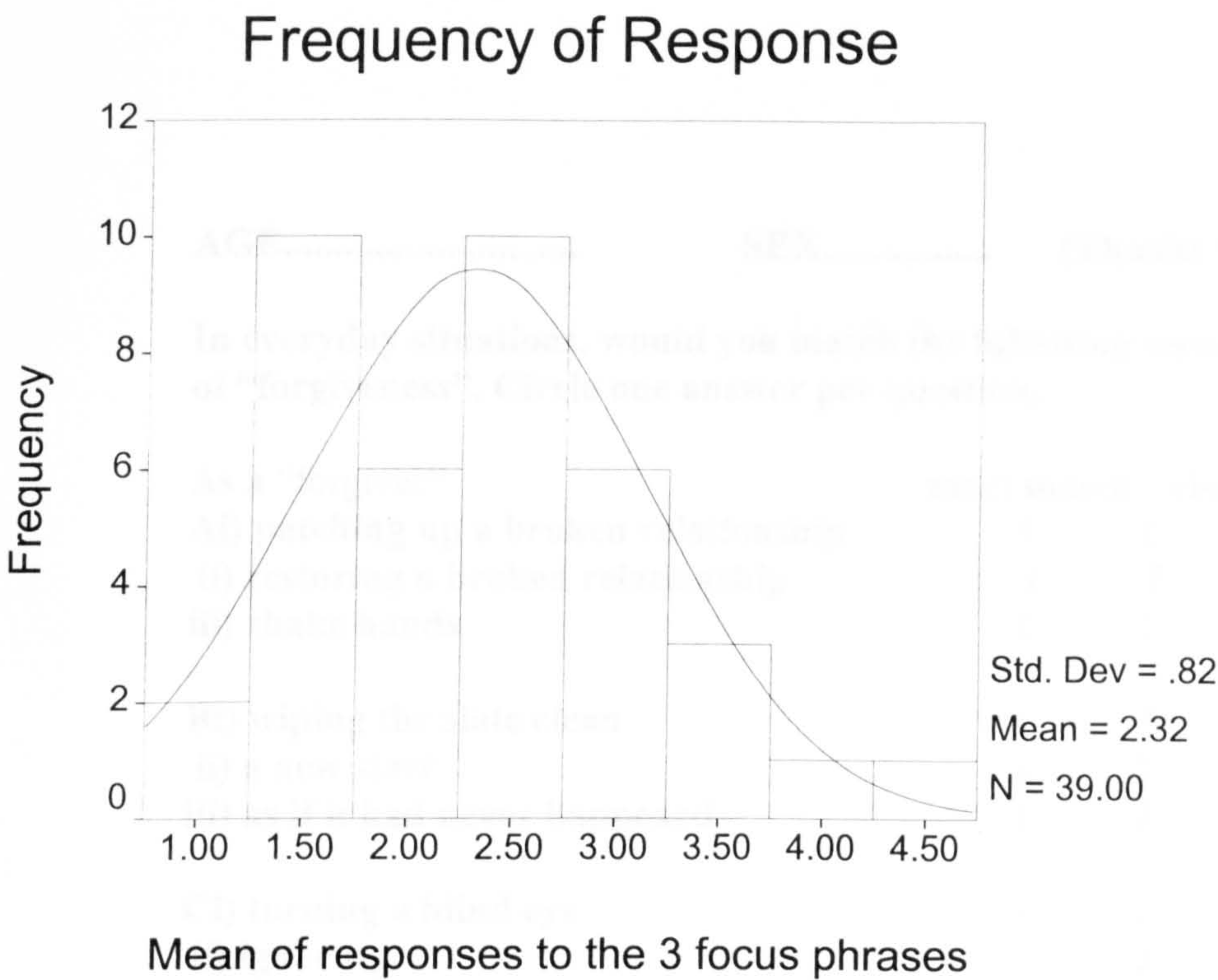
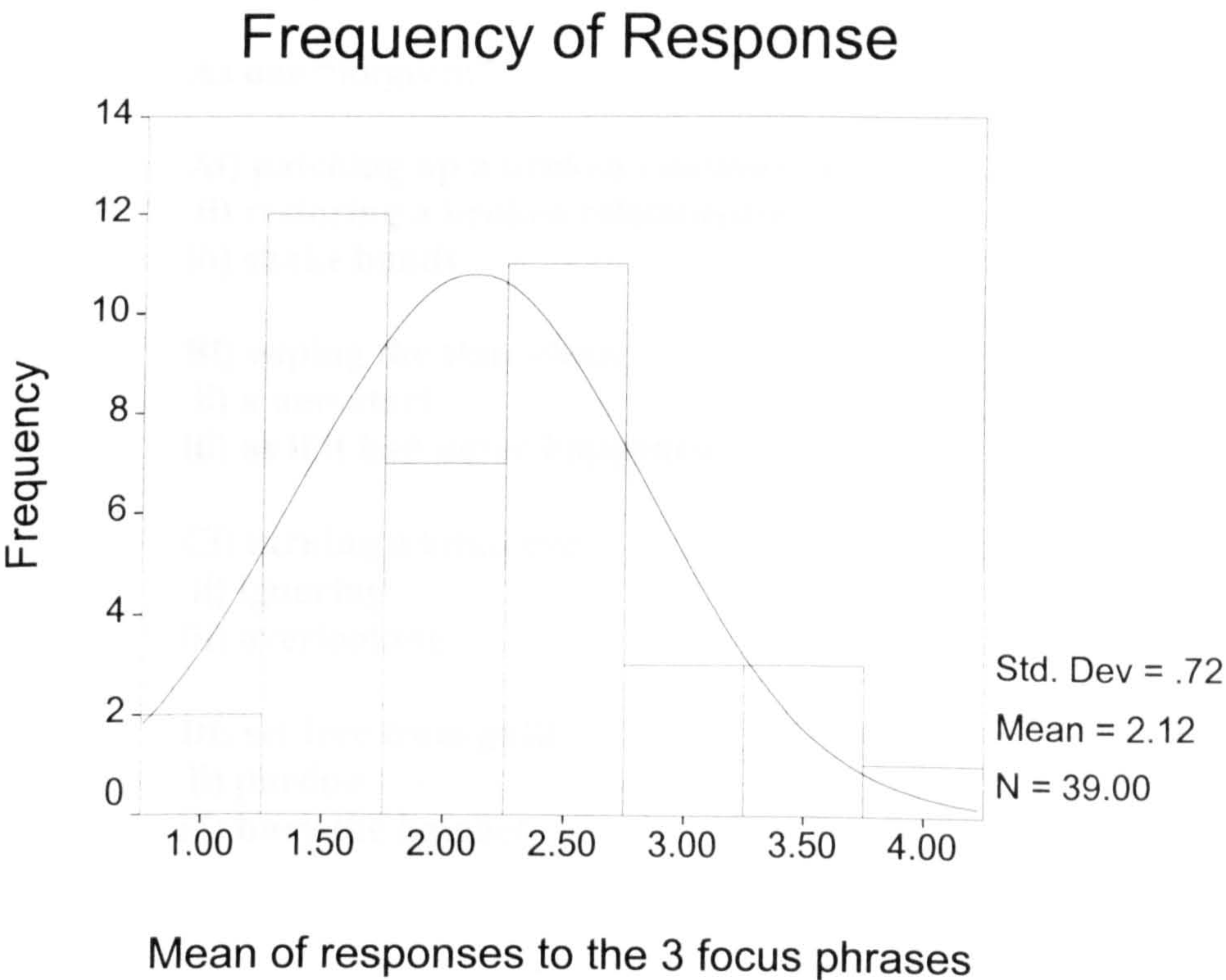


Table 7-6h. Guilt Reduction Component (FN)





AGE..... SEX..... (Thanks for your help!)

In everyday situations, would you match the following terms, to your understanding of “forgiveness”. Circle one answer per question.

As a “forgiver”	exact match	close match	no match		
Ai) patching up a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
ii) restoring a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
iii) shake hands	1	2	3	4	5
Bi) wiping the slate clean	1	2	3	4	5
ii) a new start	1	2	3	4	5
iii) as if it had never happened	1	2	3	4	5
Ci) turning a blind eye	1	2	3	4	5
ii) ignoring	1	2	3	4	5
iii) overlooking	1	2	3	4	5
Di) set free from guilt	1	2	3	4	5
ii) pardon	1	2	3	4	5
iii) bury the hatchet	1	2	3	4	5
As one “forgiven”					
Ai) patching up a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
ii) restoring a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
iii) shake hands	1	2	3	4	5
Bi) wiping the slate clean	1	2	3	4	5
ii) a new start	1	2	3	4	5
iii) as if it had never happened	1	2	3	4	5
Ci) turning a blind eye	1	2	3	4	5
i) ignoring	1	2	3	4	5
ii) overlooking	1	2	3	4	5
Di) set free from guilt	1	2	3	4	5
i) pardon	1	2	3	4	5
ii) bury the hatchet	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX C

### Study 2

(Chapter 8)



Table 8-4.

Average Correlations Between Component Focus Phrases, Non-Target Focus Phrases, Total Focus Phrases, and Components (*N* = 63)

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Relationships (FR)	3 component focus phrases	0.70
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.13
	total focus phrases (21)	0.14
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.09
Component	Focus Phrases:Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Relationships (FR)	3 component focus phrases	0.42
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.05
	total focus phrases (21)	0.18
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.09

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
New Beginning (FR)	3 component focus phrases	0.82
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.20
	total focus phrases (21)	0.22
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.17
Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
New Beginning (FR)	3 component focus phrases	0.54
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.14
	total focus phrases (21)	0.26
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.17

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Condoning (FR)	3 component focus phrases	0.87
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.11
	total focus phrases (21)	0.10
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.03
Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Condoning (FR)	3 component focus phrases	0.50
	9 non-component focus phrases	-0.06
	total focus phrases (21)	0.15
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.03

Table 8-4. continued

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson r
Guilt Reduction (FR)	3 component focus phrases	0.82
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.19
	total focus phrases (21)	0.22
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.19
Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson r
Guilt Reduction (FR)	3 component focus phrases	0.44
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.19
	total focus phrases (21)	0.28
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.19

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson r
Relationships (FN)	3 component focus phrases	0.46
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.05
	total focus phrases (21)	0.14
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.06
Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson r
Relationships (FN)	3 component focus phrases	0.64
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.06
	total focus phrases (21)	0.12
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.06

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson r
New Beginning (FN)	3 component focus phrases	0.58
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.15
	total focus phrases (21)	0.25
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.16
Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson r
New Beginning (FN)	3 component focus phrases	0.76
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.18
	total focus phrases (21)	0.22
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.16



Table 8-4. continued

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson r
Condoning (FN)	3 component focus phrases	0.50
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.07
	total focus phrases (21)	0.16
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.04
Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson r
Condoning (FN)	3 component focus phrases	0.86
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.01
	total focus phrases (21)	0.11
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.04

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson r
Guilt Reduction (FN)	3 component focus phrases	0.52
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.07
	total focus phrases (21)	0.19
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.11
Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson r
Guilt Reduction (FN)	3 component focus phrases	0.67
	9 non-component focus phrases	0.16
	total focus phrases (21)	0.17
	non-component focus phrases (18)	0.11

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Tables 8-9a-b Histograms

Table 8-9a Gender

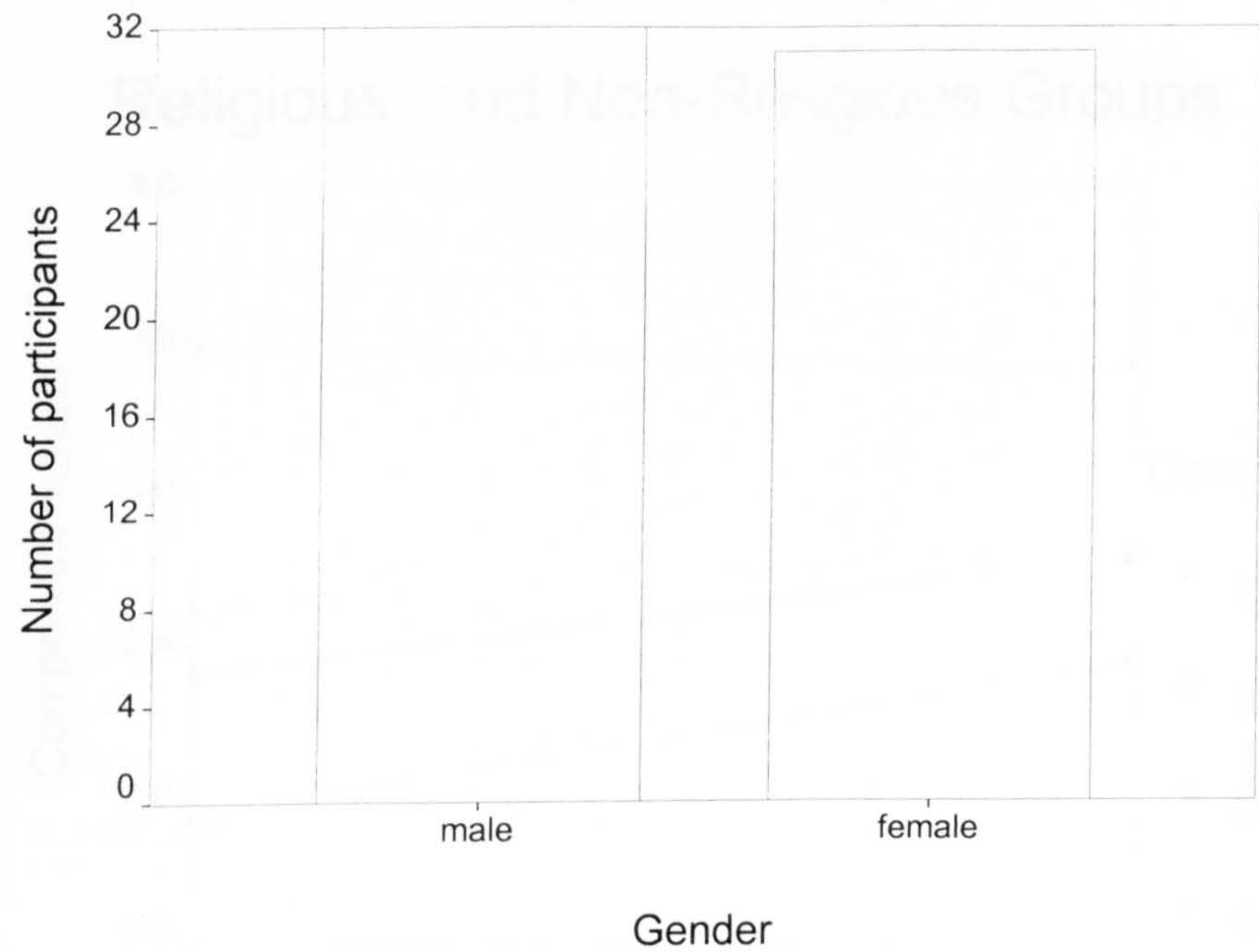
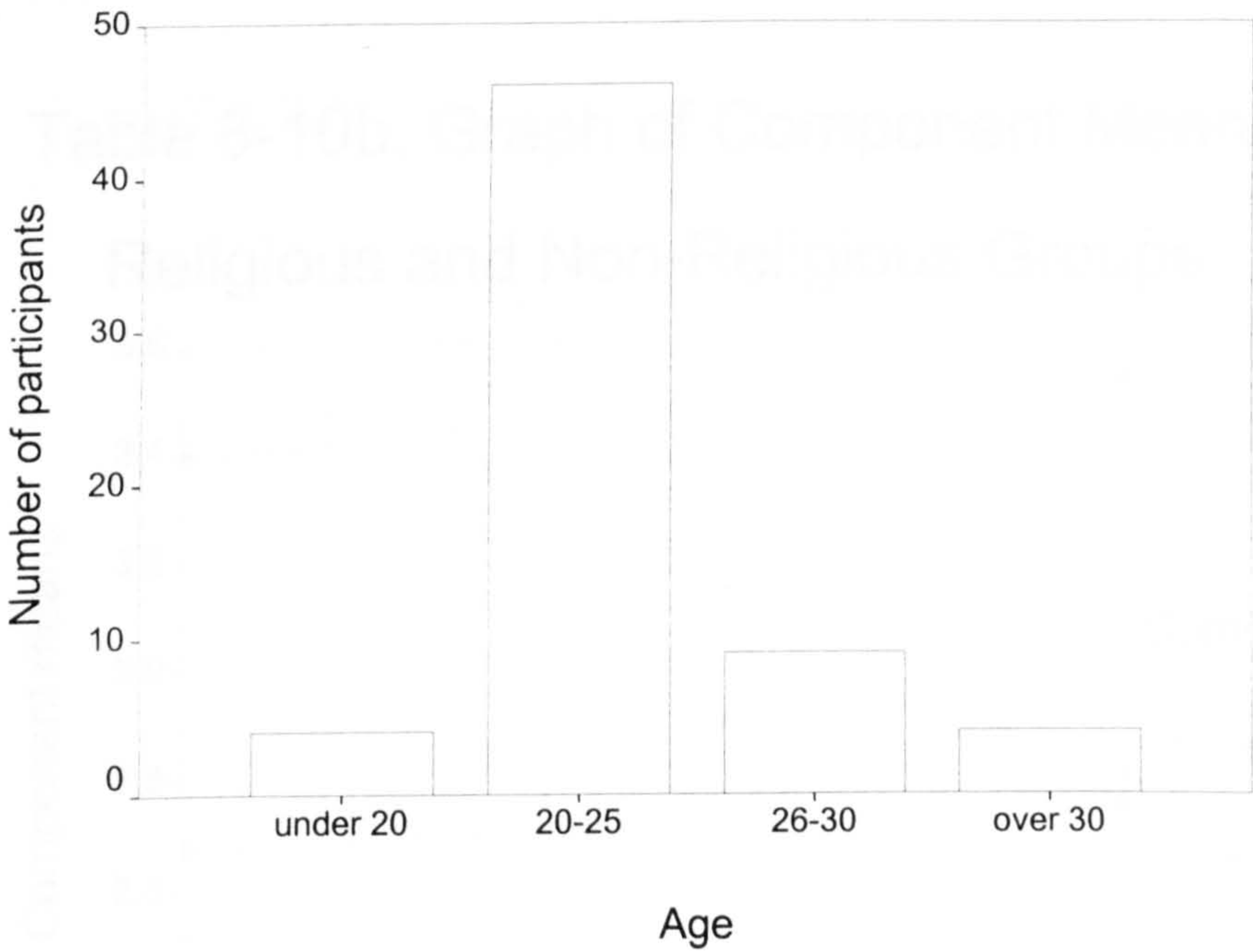


Table 8-9b Age



Tables 8-10 (a-d) Graphs of Component Means

Table 8-10a. Graph of Component Means

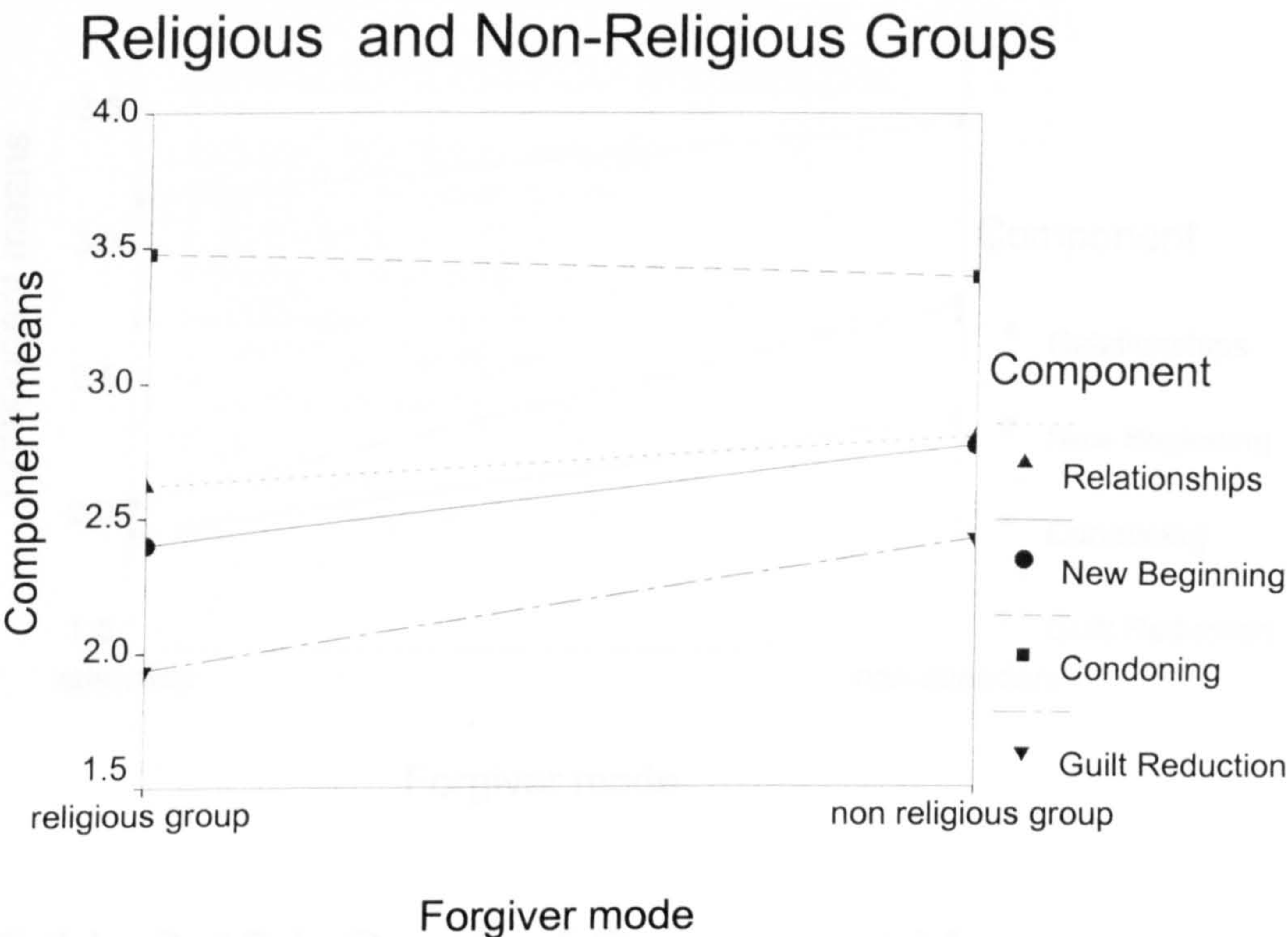


Table 8-10b. Graph of Component Means

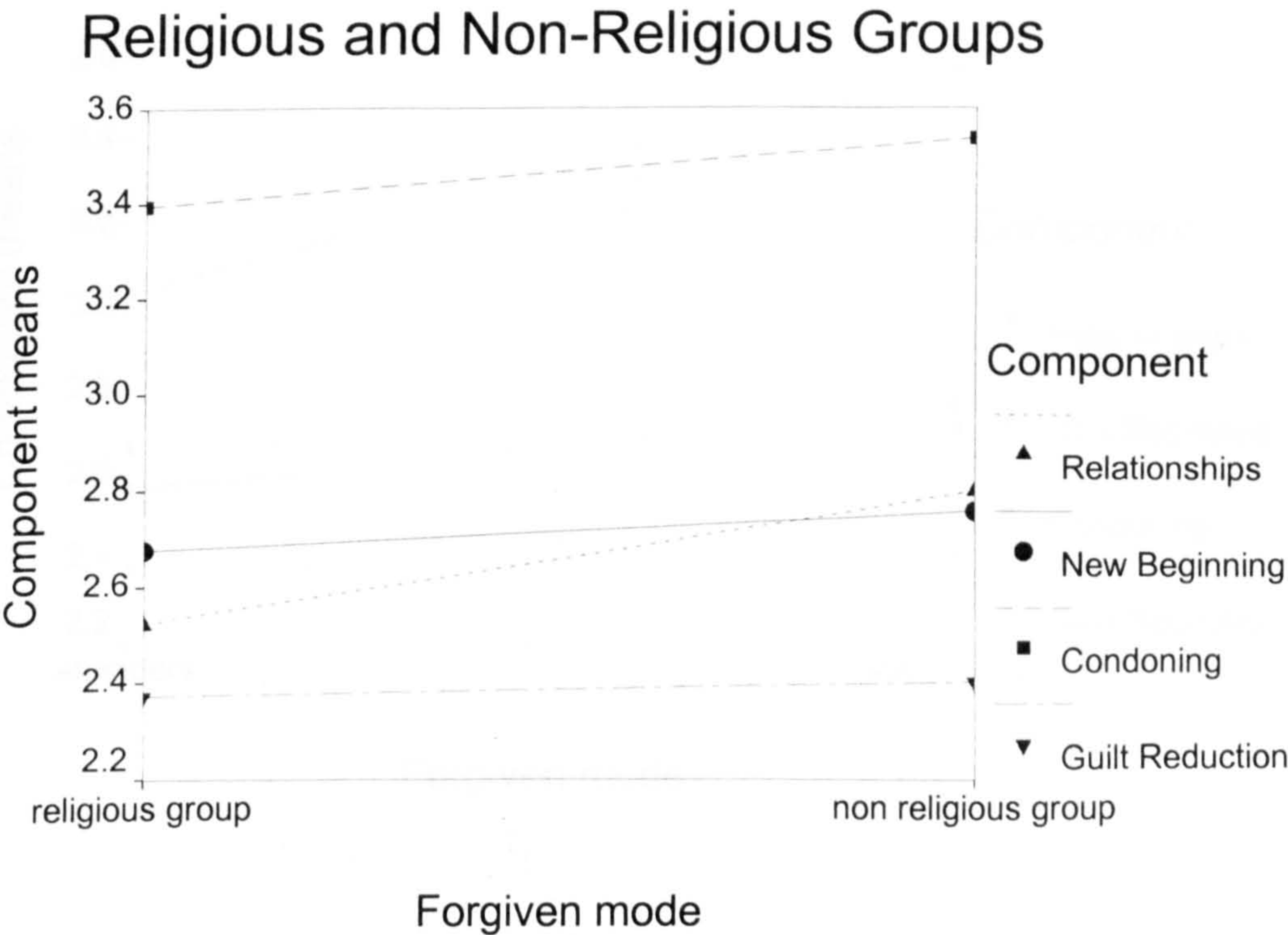




Table 8-10c. Graph of Component Means

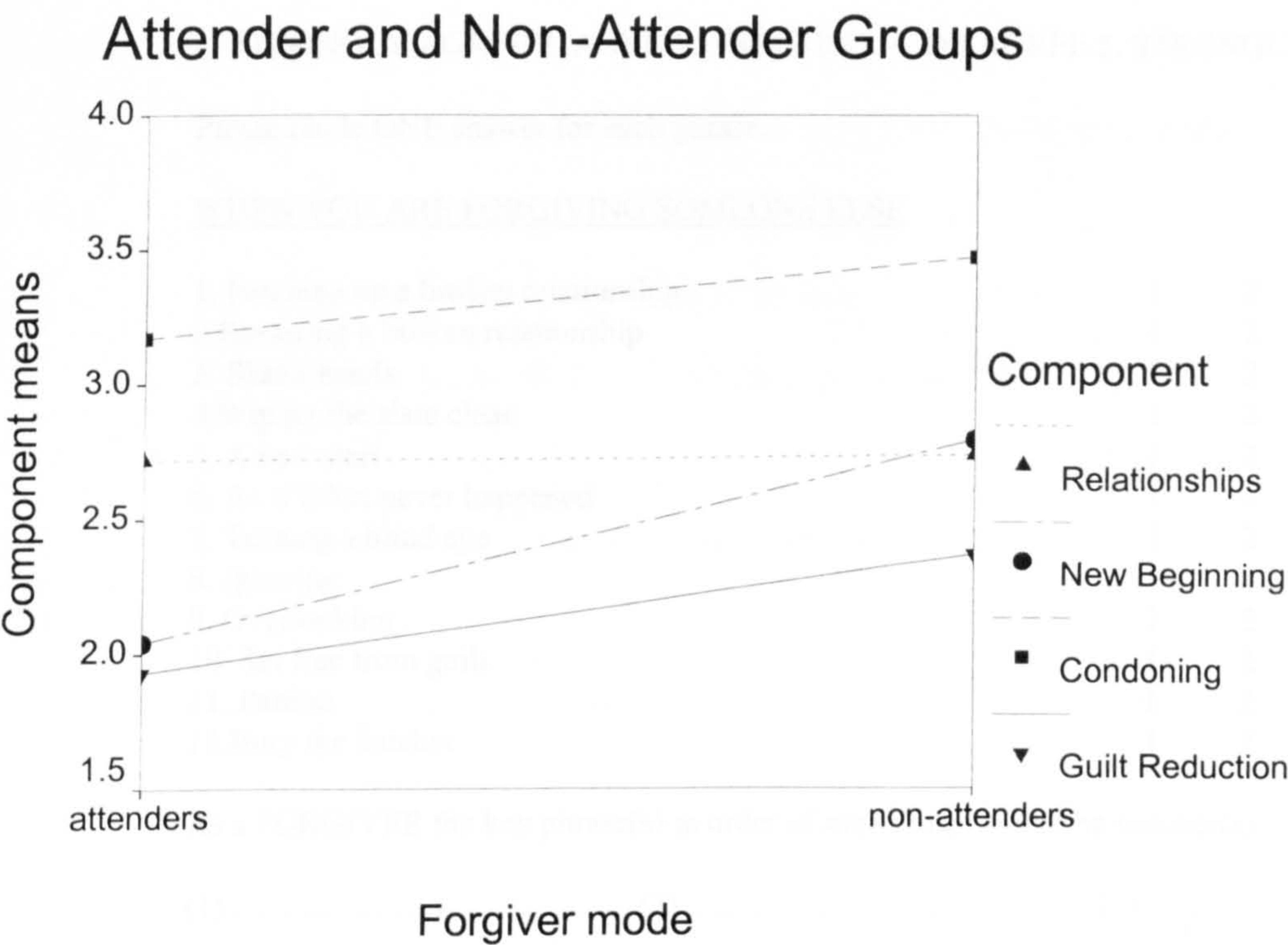
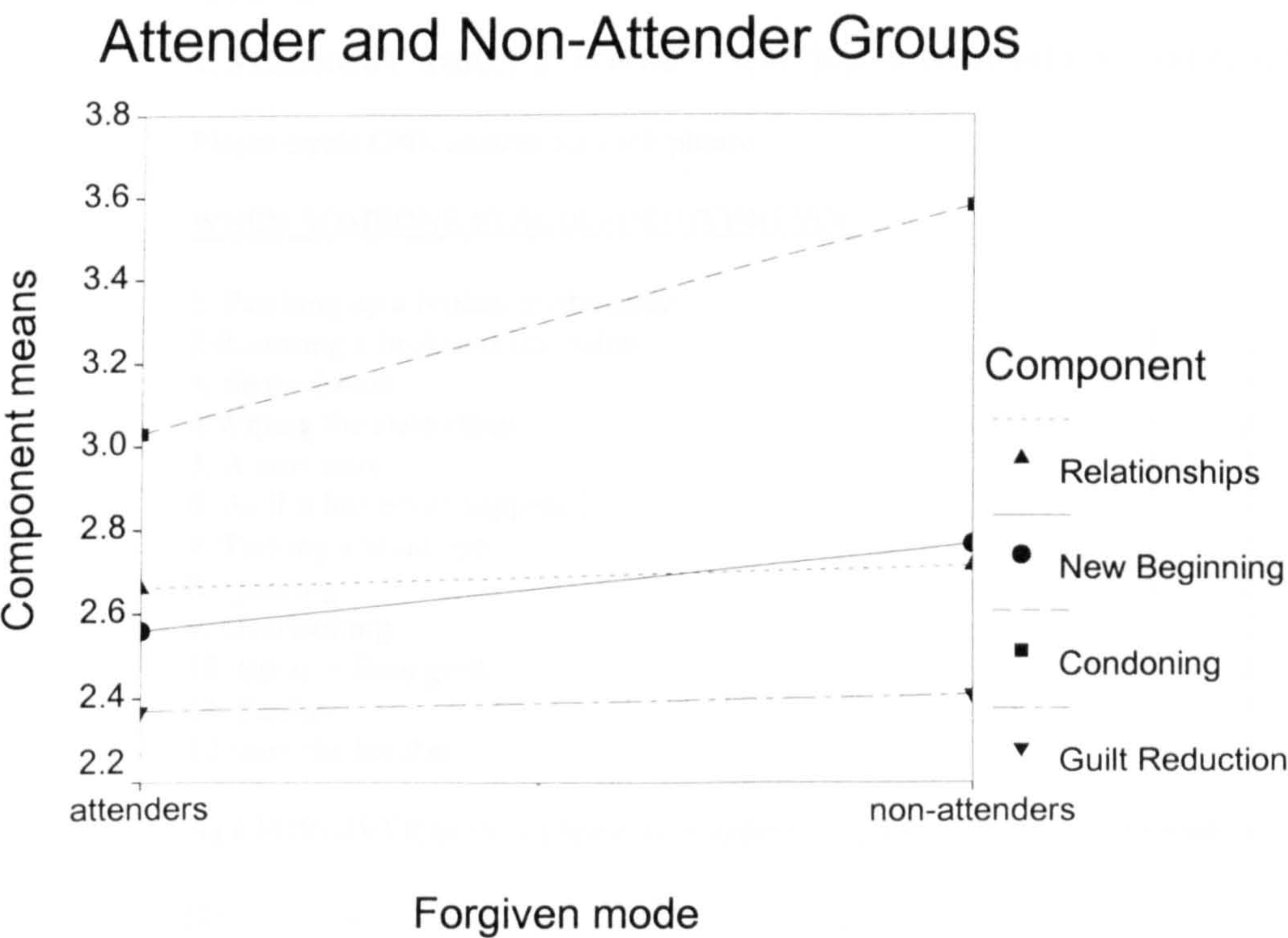


Table 8-10d. Graph of Component Means



To what extent do you agree that the following phrases represent your own understanding of forgiveness in everyday situations.

1. STRONGLY AGREE 2. AGREE 3. NEUTRAL 4. DISAGREE 5. STRONGLY DISAGREE

Please circle ONE answer for each phrase.

WHEN YOU ARE FORGIVING SOMEONE ELSE

1. Patching up a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
2.Restoring a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
3. Shake hands	1	2	3	4	5
4.Wiping the slate clean	1	2	3	4	5
5. A new start	1	2	3	4	5
6. As if it has never happened	1	2	3	4	5
7. Turning a blind eye	1	2	3	4	5
8. Ignoring	1	2	3	4	5
9. Overlooking	1	2	3	4	5
10. Set free from guilt	1	2	3	4	5
11. Pardon	1	2	3	4	5
12.Bury the hatchet	1	2	3	4	5

As a FORGIVER the key phrase(s) in order of importance would be number(s)

(1).....(2).....(3).....

To what extent do you agree that the following phrases represent your own understanding of forgiveness in everyday situations.

1. STRONGLY AGREE 2. AGREE 3. NEUTRAL 4. DISAGREE 5. STRONGLY DISAGREE

Please circle ONE answer for each phrase.

WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS FORGIVING YOU

1. Patching up a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
2.Restoring a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
3. Shake hands	1	2	3	4	5
4.Wiping the slate clean	1	2	3	4	5
5. A new start	1	2	3	4	5
6. As if it has never happened	1	2	3	4	5
7. Turning a blind eye	1	2	3	4	5
8. Ignoring	1	2	3	4	5
9. Overlooking	1	2	3	4	5
10. Set free from guilt	1	2	3	4	5
11. Pardon	1	2	3	4	5
12.Bury the hatchet	1	2	3	4	5

As a FORGIVER the key phrase(s) in order of importance would be number(s)

(1).....(2).....(3).....



*Please circle your answers to the following questions.*

2. Religious Affiliation

1. NONE 2. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND 3. ROMAN CATHOLIC 4. FREE CHURCH  
5. OTHER.....

3. Frequency of attendance at a place of worship.

1. WEEKLY 2. MONTHLY 3. SOMETIMES 4. NEVER

4. "I believe in God."

STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE / NEUTRAL / DISAGREE / STRONGLY DISAGREE

5. "I believe in life after death."

STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE / NEUTRAL / DISAGREE / STRONGLY DISAGREE

6. I would describe myself as:

1. VERY RELIGIOUS  
2. RELIGIOUS  
3. NEUTRAL  
4. NOT INTERESTED  
5. ANTI-RELIGIOUS

7. Age Group

1. Under 20 years  
2. 20-25  
3. 26-30  
4. Over 30

8. Sex

MALE/FEMALE

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

APPENDIX D

Study 3

(Chapter 9)



Table 9-1.

List of Components and Focus Phrases

Component	Focus Phrase
Relationships	patch up a broken relationship
	restore a broken relationship
	kiss and make-up
New Beginning	wipe the slate clean
	a new start
	as if it never happened
Healing	no longer hurting
	broken wounds healed
	feeling better about yourself
Guilt Reduction	set free from guilt
	pardon
	bury the hatchet
Condoning	turning a blind eye
	ignoring
	overlooking
Legal	remit the penalty of
	amnesty
	acquit
Religious	we must forgive our enemies if we ourselves expect forgiveness
	God forgives us, so we must forgive other people
	love keeps no record of wrongs

Table 9-2.

Response Percentages to Focus Phrases: Forgiver Mode

		Expected %: 40%	Expected %: 20%	Expected %: 40%
Component	Focus Phrase	S.Agree/Agree	Neutral	Disagree/S.D
Relationships	Patch up a broken relationship	56%⇐	28%	16%
	Restore a broken relationship	52%⇐	37%	11%
	Kiss & make up	60%⇐	23%	17%
New Beg.	Wipe the slate clean	59%⇐	28%	13%
	A new start	61%⇐	27%	12%
	As if it never happened	21%	20%	59%⇒
Condoning	Turning a blind eye	19%	21%	60%⇒
	Ignoring	30%	46%↑↑	24%
	Overlooking	22%	30%↑↑	48%⇒
Guilt Red.	Set free from guilt*	44%⇐	29%↑↑	27%
	Pardon	57%⇐	28%	15%
	Bury the hatchet	62%⇐	21%	17%
Healing	No longer hurting	33%	43%↑↑	24%
	Broken wounds healed	40%	30%↑↑	30%
	Feeling better about yourself	47%⇐	34%	19%
Religious	We must forgive our enemies	40%	24%	36%
	God forgives us,	18%	27%	55%⇒
	Love keeps no record of wrongs	21%	22%	57%⇒
Legal	Remit the penalty of	22%	56%↑↑	22%
	Amnesty	36%	51%↑↑	13%
	Acquit	33%	43%↑↑	24%
Other	Cease to feel resentment	47%⇐	21%	32%
	Set free	42%	44%↑↑	14%
	Shake hands	29%	40%↑↑	31%

\* ambiguous  
Arrows indicate direction of response.



Table 9-3.  
Response Percentages to Focus Phrases: Forgiven Mode

		Expected %: 40%	Expected %: 20%	Expected %: 40%
Component	Focus Phrase	S.Agree/Agree	Neutral	Disagree/S.D
Relationships	Patch up...	56%⇐	28%	16%
	Restore...	61%⇐	21%	18%
	Kiss & make up	68%⇐	19%	13%
New Beg.	Wipe the slate...	50%⇐	29%	21%
	A new start	59%⇐	19%	22%
	As if ...	25%	22%	53%⇒
Condoning	Turning a blind eye	13%	31%	56%⇒
	Ignoring	12%	29%	52% ⇒
	Overlooking	19%	32%	49%⇒
Guilt Red.	Set free from guilt*	41%⇐	30%↑	29%
	Pardon	63%⇐	27%	10%
	Bury the hatchet	72%⇐	16%	12%
Healing	No longer hurting*	38%	28%↑	34%
	Broken wounds healed	46%⇐	32%↑	22%
	Feeling better about yourself	60%⇐	22%	18%
Religious	We must forgive our enemies	43%	24%	33%
	God forgives us,	16%	28%	56%⇒
	Love keeps no record of wrongs	22%	25%	53%⇒
Legal	Remit the penalty of	21%	54%↑↑	25%
	Amnesty	41%	45%↑↑	14%
	Acquit	34%	51%↑↑	15%
Other	Cease to feel resentment	52%⇐	23%	25%
	Set free	41%	40%↑↑	19%
	Shake hands	35%	41%↑↑	24%

ambiguous  
Arrows indicate direction of response.

Table 9-4.

Average Correlations Between Components and Selected Focus Phrases (1) Component Focus Phrases (2) Non-Component Focus Phrases, (3) Total Focus Phrases and (4) Total Non-Component Focus Phrases

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Relationships (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.79
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.22
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Relationships (FR)	1.3 component focus phrases	0.48
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.21
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.03
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
New Beginning (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.64
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.28
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
New Beginning (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.32
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.26
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.03
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Healing (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.65
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.21
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.01
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01



Table 9-4 continued

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Healing (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.26
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.16
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Guilt Reduction (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.74
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.28
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Guilt Reduction (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.42
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.21
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.25
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Condoning (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.76
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.11
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.01
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.00

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Condoning (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.52
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.00
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.00

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Legal (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.75
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.17
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Table 9-4 continued

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Legal (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.56
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.20
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Religious (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.75
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.21
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.01
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Religious (FR)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.30
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.12
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Relationships (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.32
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.12
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Relationships (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.78
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.21
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.03
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
New Beginning (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.34
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.18
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01



Table 9-4 continued

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
New Beginning (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.68
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.25
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Healing (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.25
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.10
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Healing (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.70
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.22
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.01
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Guilt Reduction (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.46
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.19
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Guilt Reduction (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.67
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.24
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Condoning (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.51
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.17
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Table 9-4. continued

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Condoning (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.79
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.10
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Legal (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.55
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.20
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.03
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Legal (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.78
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.32
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiver	Pearson <i>r</i>
Religious (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.61
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.17
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01

Component	Focus Phrases: Forgiven	Pearson <i>r</i>
Religious (FN)	1. 3 component focus phrases	0.65
	2. 21 non-component focus phrases	0.16
	3. total focus phrases (45)	0.02
	4. total non-component focus phrases (42)	0.01



Tables 9-11a-b Histograms

Table 9-11a Gender

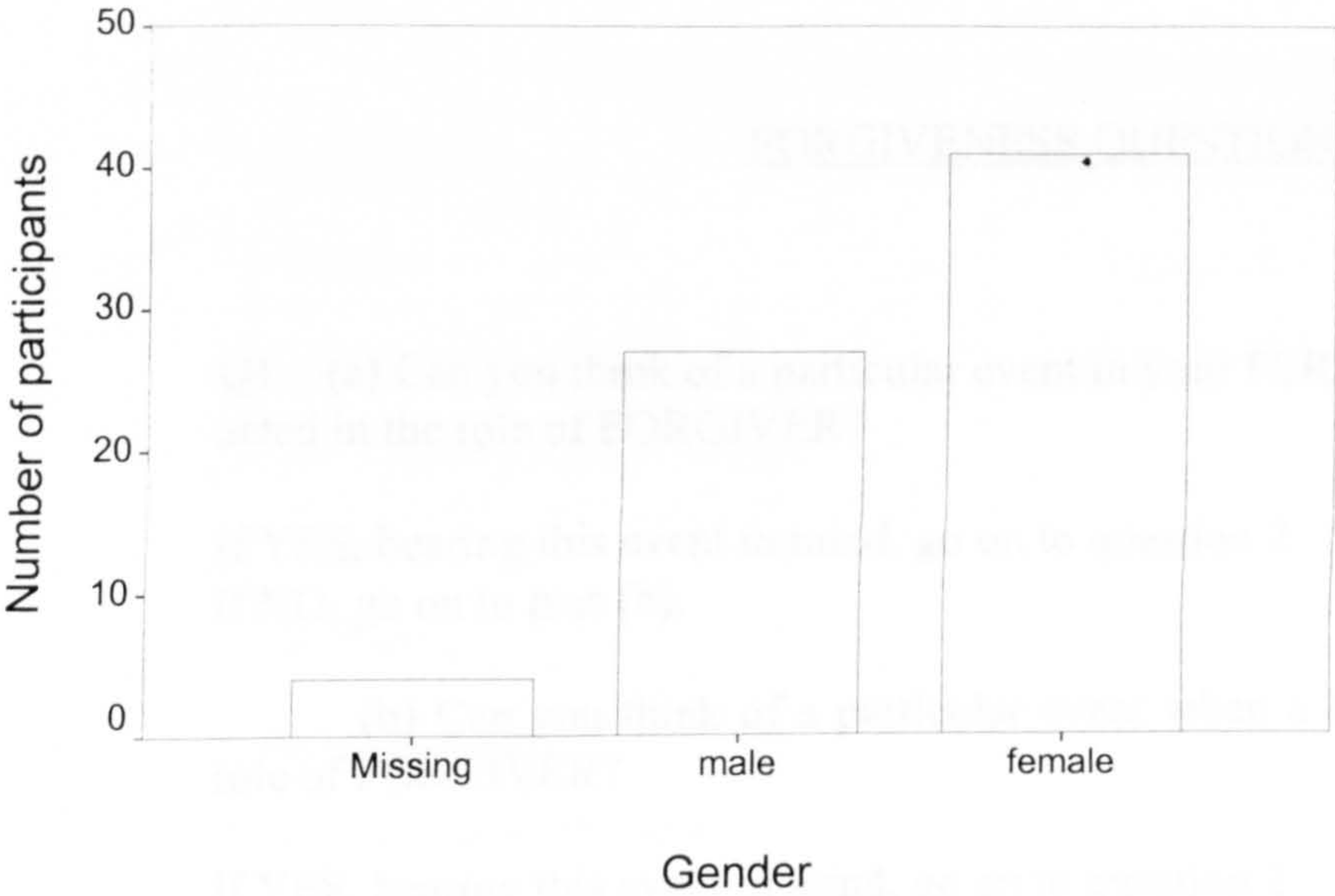
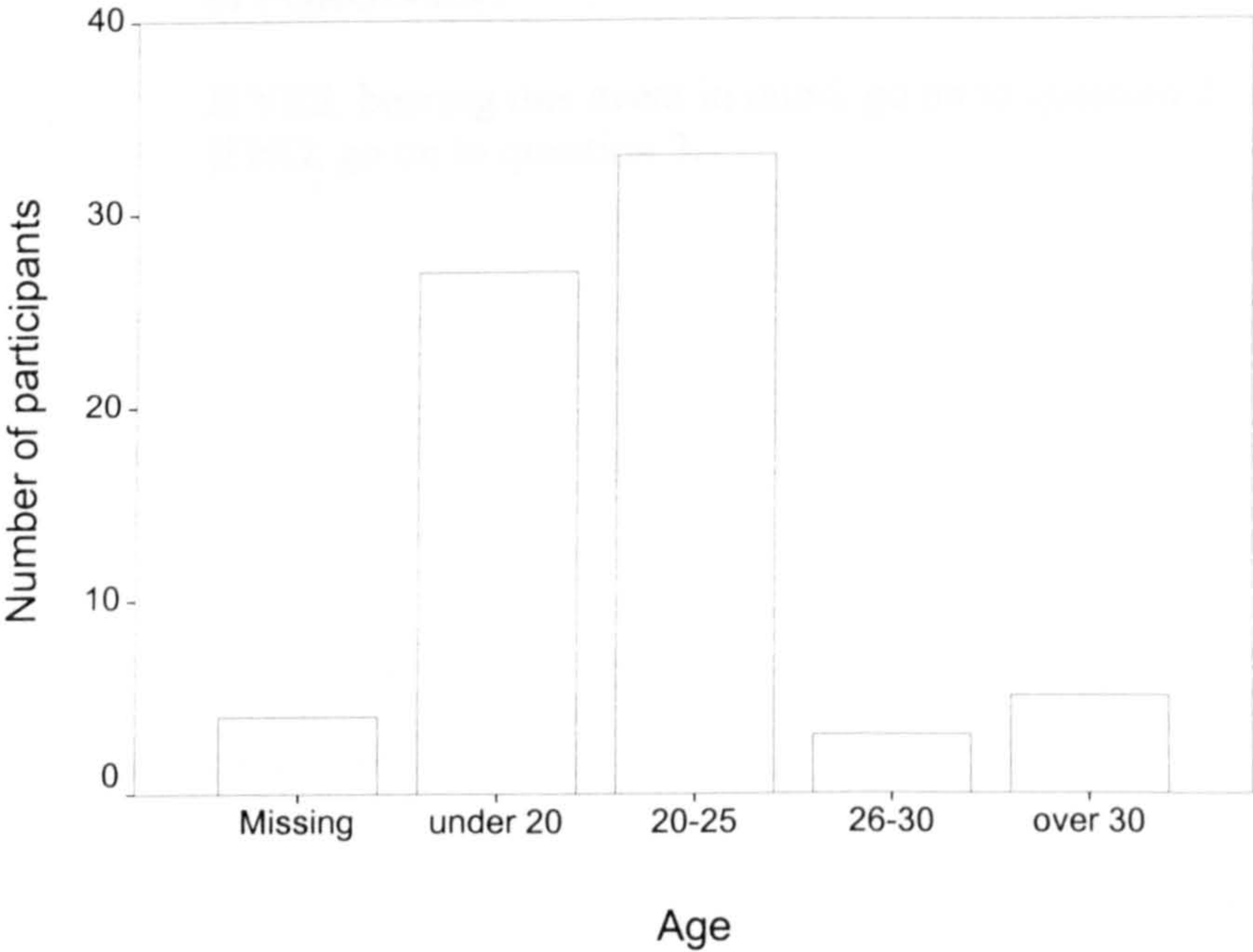


Table 9-11b Age



FORGIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1 (a) Can you think of a particular event in your PERSONAL EXPERIENCE when you acted in the role of FORGIVER? Y/N

If YES, bearing this event in mind, go on to question 2.  
If NO, go on to part (b).

(b) Can you think of a particular event when a RELATIVE/FRIEND acted in the role of FORGIVER? Y/N

If YES, bearing this event in mind, go on to question 2.  
If NO, go on to part (c).

(c) Can you think of a particular event in fiction when a character acted in the role of FORGIVER? Y/N

If YES, bearing this event in mind, go on to question 2.  
If NO, go on to question 3.



QUESTION 2      YOU ARE IN THE ROLE OF FORGIVER      R 2.

Please circle one answer for each phrase representing your own understanding of forgiveness.

1 Strongly agree   2 Agree   3 Neutral   4 Disagree   5 Strongly disagree

1 Kiss and make up	• 1	2	3	4	5	..
2 Set free	1	2	3	4	5	↵
3 Cease to feel resentment	1	2	3	4	5	
4 Love keeps no record of wrongs	1	2	3	4	5	
5 Acquit	1	2	3	4	5	
6 Overlooking	1	2	3	4	5	
7 Bury the hatchet	1	2	3	4	5	
8 Feeling better about yourself	1	2	3	4	5	
9 As if it never happened	1	2	3	4	5	
10 Shake hands	1	2	3	4	5	
11 God forgives us, so we must forgive other people	1	2	3	4	5	
12 Amnesty	1	2	3	4	5	
13 Ignoring	1	2	3	4	5	
14 Pardon	1	2	3	4	5	
15 Broken wounds healed	1	2	3	4	5	
16 A new start	1	2	3	4	5	
17 Restore a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5	
18 We must forgive our enemies if we expect forgiveness	1	2	3	4	5	
19 Remit the penalty of	1	2	3	4	5	
20 Turning a blind eye	1	2	3	4	5	
21 Set free from guilt	1	2	3	4	5	
22 No longer hurting	1	2	3	4	5	
23 Wipe the slate clean	1	2	3	4	5	
24 Patch up a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5	

Q3 (a) Can you think of a particular event.in your PERSONAL EXPERIENCE when you were FORGIVEN ? YES/NO

If YES, bearing this event in mind, go on to question 4.  
If NO, go on to part (b).

(b) Can you think of a particular event when a RELATIVE/FRIEND acted in the role of FORGIVER? YES/NO

If YES, bearing this event in mind, go on to question 4.  
If NO, go on to part (c).

(c) Can you think of a particular event in fiction when a character acted in the role of FORGIVEN? YES/NO

If YES, bearing this event in mind, go on to question 4.  
If NO, go on to question 4.



QUESTION 4      YOU ARE IN THE ROLE OF FORGIVEN      N 2.

Please circle one answer for each phrase representing your own understanding of forgiveness.

	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree
1 Patch up a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
2 Wipe the slate clean	1	2	3	4	5
3 No longer hurting	1	2	3	4	5
4 Set free from guilt	1	2	3	4	5
5 Turning a blind eye	1	2	3	4	5
6 Remit the penalty of	1	2	3	4	5
7 We must forgive our enemies if we expect forgiveness	1	2	3	4	5
8 Restore a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
9 A new start	1	2	3	4	5
10 Broken wounds healed	1	2	3	4	5
11 Pardon	1	2	3	4	5
12 Ignoring	1	2	3	4	5
13 Amnesty	1	2	3	4	5
14 God forgives us, so we must forgive other people	1	2	3	4	5
15 Shake hands	1	2	3	4	5
16 As if it never happened	1	2	3	4	5
17 Feeling better about yourself	1	2	3	4	5
18 Bury the hatchet	1	2	3	4	5
19 Overlooking	1	2	3	4	5
20 Acquit	1	2	3	4	5
21 Love keeps no record of wrongs	1	2	3	4	5
22 Cease to feel resentment	1	2	3	4	5
23 Set free	1	2	3	4	5
24 Kiss and make up	1	2	3	4	5

**Question 5**

Please circle your answers to the following questions.

**(a) Religious Affiliation**

1. Buddhist
2. Christian
3. Hindu
4. Jew
5. Muslim
6. Sikh
7. Other
8. None

**(b) Frequency of attendance at a place of worship.**

1. WEEKLY 2. MONTHLY 3. SOMETIMES 4 NEVER

**(c) I believe in God.**

STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE / NEUTRAL\* / DISAGREE / STRONGLY DISAGREE

**(d) I believe in life after death.**

STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE / NEUTRAL\* / DISAGREE / STRONGLY DISAGREE

**(e) I would describe myself as:**

1. VERY RELIGIOUS
2. RELIGIOUS
3. NON-RELIGIOUS
4. ANTI-RELIGIOUS

**(f) Age Group**

1. UNDER 20 years
2. 20-25
3. 26-30
4. OVER 30

**(g) Sex**

MALE/FEMALE

\*We are using the term neutral to cover both indecision AND indifference.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.



## APPENDIX E

### Study 4

(Chapter 10)

Tables 10-20a-b Histograms

Table 10-20a Gender

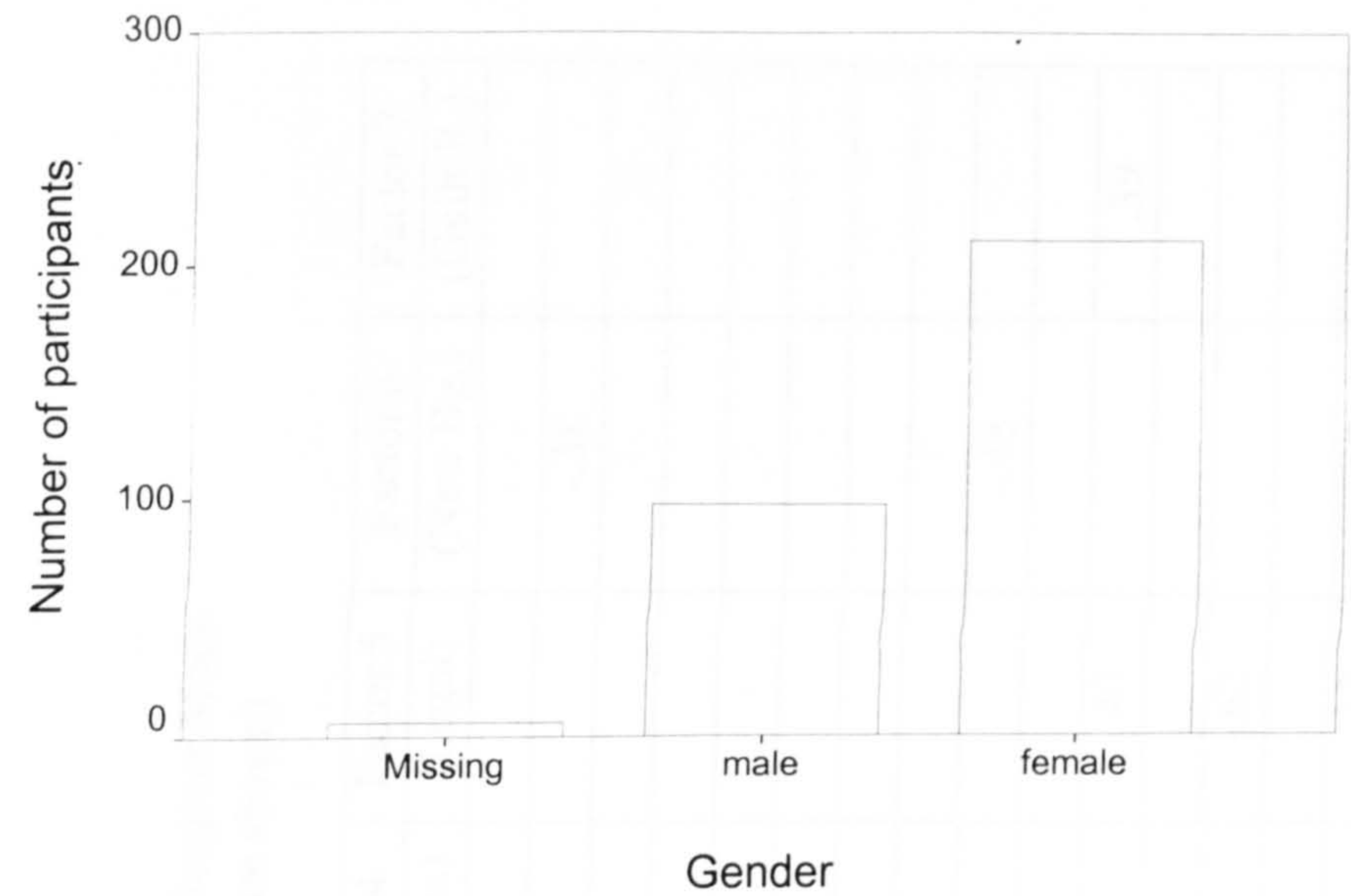


Table 10-20b Age

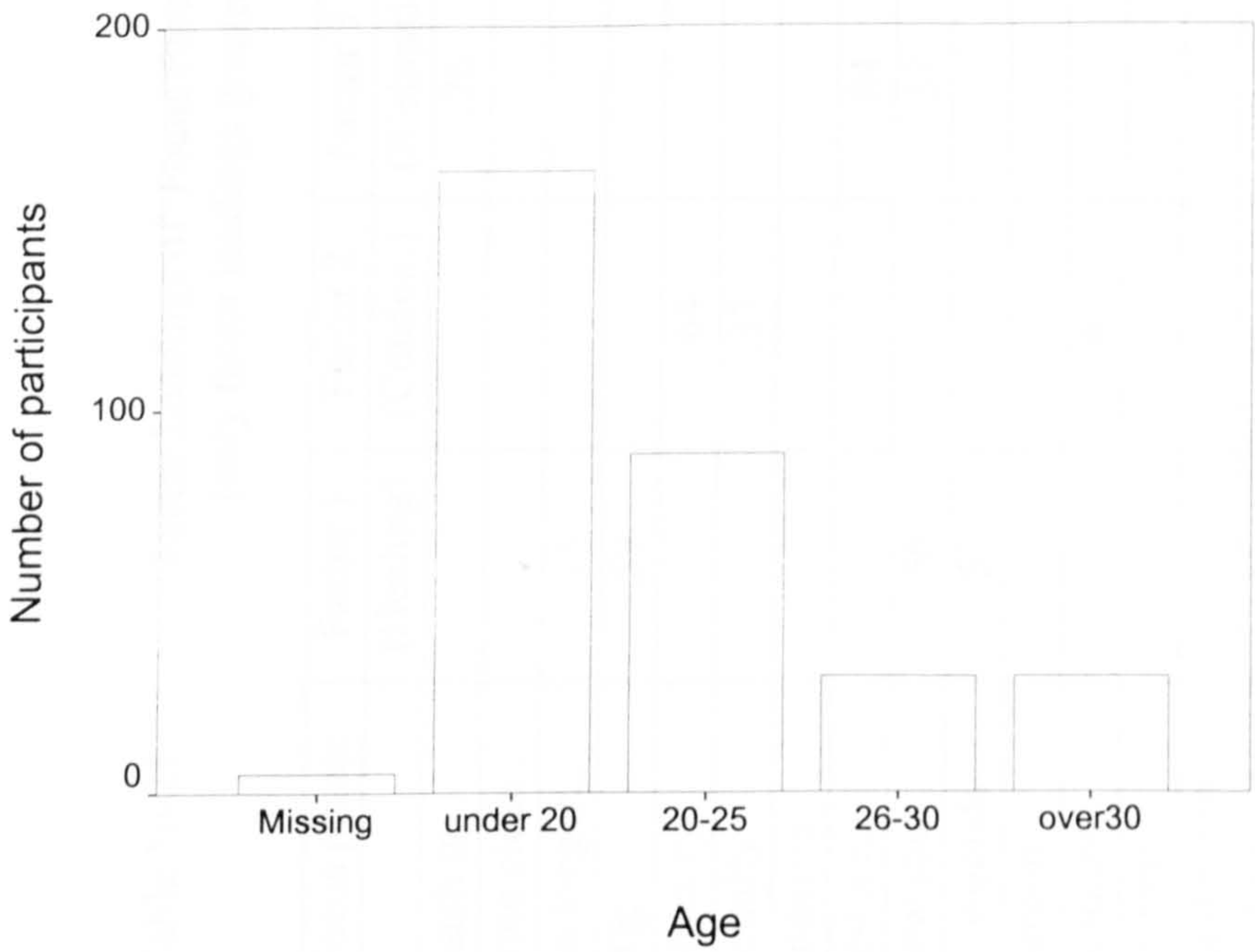




Table 10-21

Factor Loadings of Focus Phrases in the Forgiver Mode  
(only factor loadings greater than .30 are shown)

Focus phrase	Factor 1 (Healing)	Factor 2 (Condon.)	Factor 3 (R'ships)	Factor 4 (Rel'ious)	Factor 5 (Legal)	Factor 6 (New Bg.)	Factor 7 (Guilt R.)
patch up...			.76				
slate clean...				.36		-.38	
no longer...	.73						
sffg	.59						
blind eye		.64					
penalty		.37					
enemies				.65			
restore...			.84				
new start	.36		.37	.34		-.48	
b. wounds...	.57						
pardon					-.40		.39
ignoring		.67					
amnesty					-.62		
God forgives.				.68			
shake hands					-.33	-.47	
as if...		.46					
feeling better.						-.44	
hatchet						-.56	.31
overlooking		.64				-.37	
acquit							.50
love...				.50			.34
cease to feel..	.41						.63
set free	.44						.57
kiss...			.37			-.45	

Table 10-22

Factor Loadings of Focus Phrases in the Forgiven Mode  
(only factor loadings greater than .30 are shown)

Focus phrase	Factor 1 (Healing)	Factor 2 (Condon.)	Factor 3 (Rel'ious)	Factor 4 (Rel'ships)	Factor 5 (Legal)	Factor 6 (New Bg.)	Factor 7 (Guilt R.)
patch up...				.72			
slate clean...	.42			.40		-.47	-.30
no longer...	.84						
sffg	.67					-.41	-.38
blind eye		.74					
penalty		.40			.39	-.35	
enemies			.71				
restore...				.80			
new start	.32			.52		-.53	
b. wounds...	.56			.36		-.33	-.36
pardon					-.72		
ignoring		.69					
amnesty					-.59		
God forgives.			.73				
shake hands					-.40		
as if...		.43				-.43	-.56
feeling better.	.39					-.50	
hatchet						-.67	
overlooking		.64					
acquit					.32	-.41	
love...			.32				-.72
cease to feel..	.35						-.50
set free	.48					-.47	-.49
kiss...	.34			.52		-.38	-.32



Table 10-23      Factor Intercorrelations in the Forgiver Mode

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
	(Healing)	(Condon.)	(Rel'ious)	(Rel'ships)	(Legal)	(New Bg.)	(Guilt R.)
Factor 1	1.00						
Factor 2	.05	1.00					
Factor 3	.22	-.03	1.00				
Factor 4	.23	.08	.22	1.00			
Factor 5	-.12	-.03	-.08	-.10	1.00		
Factor 6	-.22	-.24	-.23	-.18	.14	1.00	
Factor 7	.29	.08	.19	.24	-.12	-.19	1.00

Table 10-24      Factor Intercorrelations in the Forgiveness Mode

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
	(Healing)	(Condon.)	(Rel'ious)	(Rel'ships)	(Legal)	(New Bg.)	(Guilt R.)
Factor 1	1.00						
Factor 2	.01	1.00					
Factor 3	.05	.05	1.00				
Factor 4	.34	-.04	.18	1.00			
Factor 5	-.16	.23	.28	.23	1.00		
Factor 6	-.36	-.19	-.10	-.32	-.33	1.00	
Factor 7	-.36	-.18	-.24	-.25	-.24	.39	1
							.00

This study is looking at personal relationships. Thank you for taking part.

Please circle your answer.

**QUESTION 1.**

**Can you think of a particular event in your personal experience when *you forgave* a person?** Y/N

If 'YES' go to (a). If 'NO' go (d).

**(a). Who did you forgive?**

**1. MOTHER 2. FATHER 3. BROTHER 4. SISTER 5. SPOUSE (MALE)  
6. SPOUSE (FEMALE) 7. MALE RELATIVE 8. FEMALE RELATIVE  
9. MALE FRIEND 10. FEMALE FRIEND**

**(b). How willing were you to forgive the person?**

**1. VERY WILLING 2. WILLING 3. NEUTRAL 4. UNWILLING  
5. VERY UNWILLING**

**(c). The damage to myself was very severe.**

**1. STRONGLY AGREE 2. AGREE 3. NEUTRAL 4. DISAGREE  
5. STRONGLY DISAGREE**

Bearing this event in mind go on to Question 2.

**(d). Can you think of a particular event when a relative/friend acted in the role of FORGIVER?** Y/N

If 'YES', bearing this event in mind go on to Question 2.

If 'NO' go to (e).

**(E). Can you think of a particular event in fiction when a character acted in the role of FORGIVER?** Y/N

If 'YES' bearing this event in mind go to Question 2.

If 'NO' go to Question 2.



QUESTION 2. How YOU feel when you are forgiving SOMEONE ELSE:

Please put a 'x' on the line to indicate your own understanding of forgiveness.

	-----1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Patch up a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
2. Wipe the slate clean	1	2	3	4	5
3. No longer hurting	1	2	3	4	5
4. Set free from guilt	1	2	3	4	5
5. Turning a blind eye	1	2	3	4	5
6. Remit the penalty of	1	2	3	4	5
7. We must forgive our enemies if we expect forgiveness	1	2	3	4	5
8. Restore a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
9. A new start	1	2	3	4	5
10. Broken wounds healed	1	2	3	4	5
11. Pardon	1	2	3	4	5
12. Ignoring	1	2	3	4	5
13. Amnesty	1	2	3	4	5
14. God forgives us, so we must forgive other people	1	2	3	4	5
15. Shake hands	1	2	3	4	5
16. As if it never happened	1	2	3	4	5
17. Feeling better about yourself	1	2	3	4	5
18. Bury the hatchet	1	2	3	4	5
19. Overlooking	1	2	3	4	5
20. Acquit	1	2	3	4	5
21. Love keeps no record of wrongs	1	2	3	4	5
22. Cease to feel resentment	1	2	3	4	5
23. Set free	1	2	3	4	5
24. Kiss and make up	1	2	3	4	5

**QUESTION 1.**

**Can you think of a particular event in your personal experience when *you were forgiven* by a person?**  
Y/N

**If 'YES' go to (a). If 'NO' go (d).**

**(a). Who forgave you?**

**1. MOTHER 2. FATHER 3. BROTHER 4. SISTER 5. SPOUSE (MALE)  
6. SPOUSE (FEMALE) 7. MALE RELATIVE 8. FEMALE RELATIVE  
9. MALE FRIEND 10. FEMALE FRIEND**

**(b). How willing were you to accept the person's forgiveness for your action?**

**1. VERY WILLING 2. WILLING 3. NEUTRAL 4. UNWILLING  
5. VERY UNWILLING**

**(c). The damage my action caused to the other was very severe.**

**1. STRONGLY AGREE 2. AGREE 3. NEUTRAL 4. DISAGREE  
5. STRONGLY DISAGREE**

**Bearing this event in mind go on to Question 4.**

**(d). Can you think of a particular event when a relative/friend was FORGIVEN?**  
Y/N

**If 'YES', bearing this event in mind go on to Question 2.**

**If 'NO' go to (e).**

**(E). Can you think of a particular event in fiction when a character acted in the role of FORGIVER?**  
Y/N

**If 'YES' bearing this event in mind go to Question 4.**

**If 'NO' go to Question 4.**



QUESTION 4. How YOU feel when SOMEONE ELSE is forgiving you:

Please put a 'x' on the line to indicate your own understanding of forgiveness.

	-----1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Kiss and make up	1	2	3	4	5
2. Set free	1	2	3	4	5
3. Cease to feel resentment	1	2	3	4	5
4. Love keeps no record of wrongs	1	2	3	4	5
5. Acquit	1	2	3	4	5
6. Overlooking	1	2	3	4	5
7. Bury the hatchet	1	2	3	4	5
8. Feeling better about yourself	1	2	3	4	5
9. As if it never happened	1	2	3	4	5
10. Shake hands	1	2	3	4	5
11. God forgives us, so we must forgive other people	1	2	3	4	5
12. Amnesty	1	2	3	4	5
13. Ignoring	1	2	3	4	5
14. Pardon	1	2	3	4	5
15. Broken wounds healed	1	2	3	4	5
16. A new start	1	2	3	4	5
17. Restore a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5
18. We must forgive our enemies if we expect forgiveness	1	2	3	4	5
19. Remit the penalty of	1	2	3	4	5
20. Turning a blind eye	1	2	3	4	5
21. Set free from guilt	1	2	3	4	5
22. No longer hurting	1	2	3	4	5
23. Wipe the slate clean	1	2	3	4	5
24. Patch up a broken relationship	1	2	3	4	5

**Question 5.**

**Please CIRCLE your answers to the following questions.**

**(a). Religious affiliation**

- 1. NONE   2. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND   3. ROMAN CATHOLIC**  
**4. BAPTIST   5. OTHER.....**

**(b). Frequency of attendance at a place of worship.**

- 1. WEEKLY   2. MONTHLY   3. OCCASIONALLY   4. NEVER**

**(c). I would describe myself as:**

- 1. VERY RELIGIOUS   2. RELIGIOUS   3. NON RELIGIOUS**  
**4. ANTI-RELIGIOUS**

**(d). Age Group**

- 1. UNDER 20 years   2. 20-25   3. 26-30   4. OVER 30**

**(e). MALE   FEMALE**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL IN THIS**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

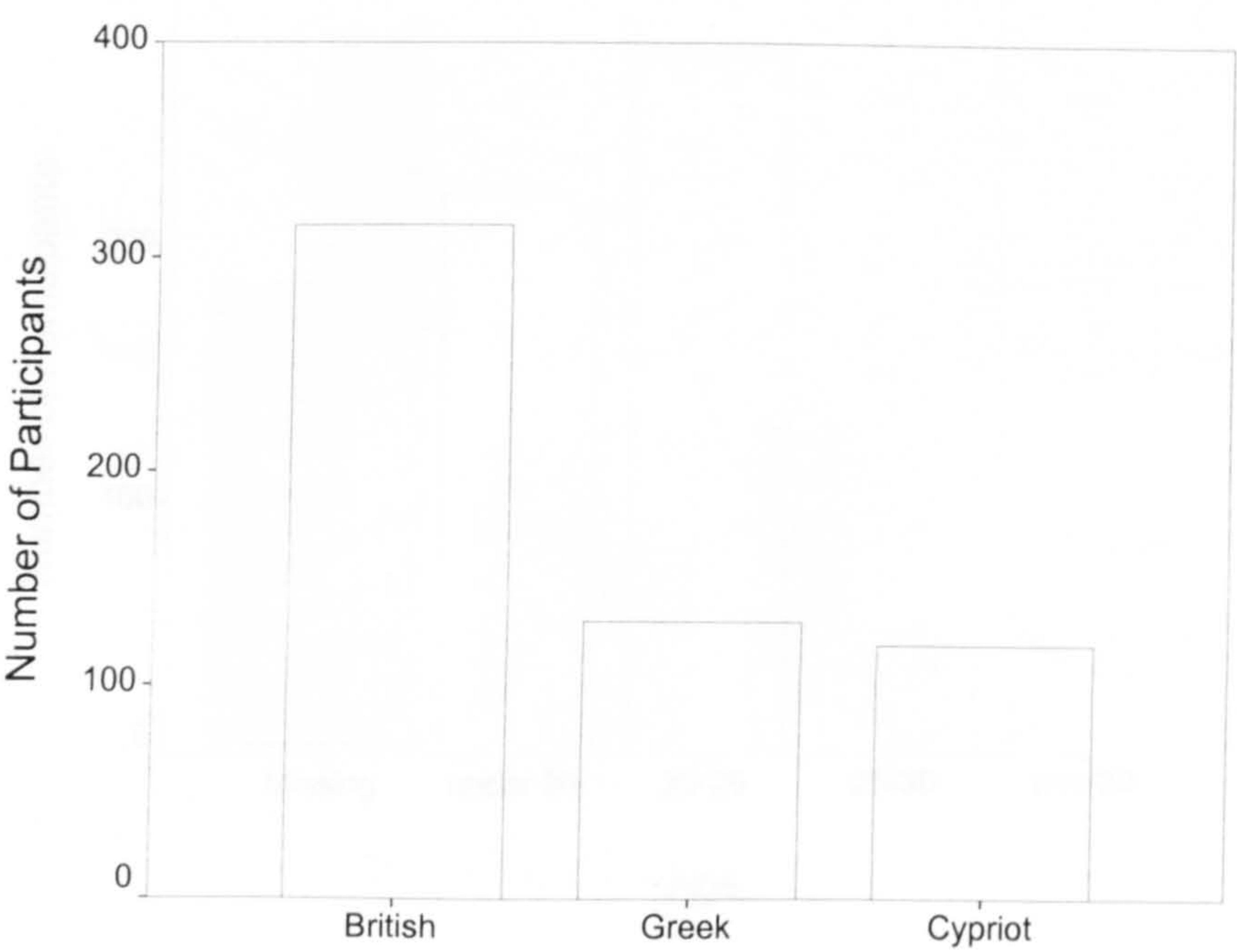


## APPENDIX F

### Study 5

(Chapter 11)

**Table 11-18. Participants in each group: British, Greek, and Cypriot**



**Table 11-21. Number of Participants in Crosscultural Groups**

**Table 11-19. Gender of the British, Greek and Cypriot Groups**

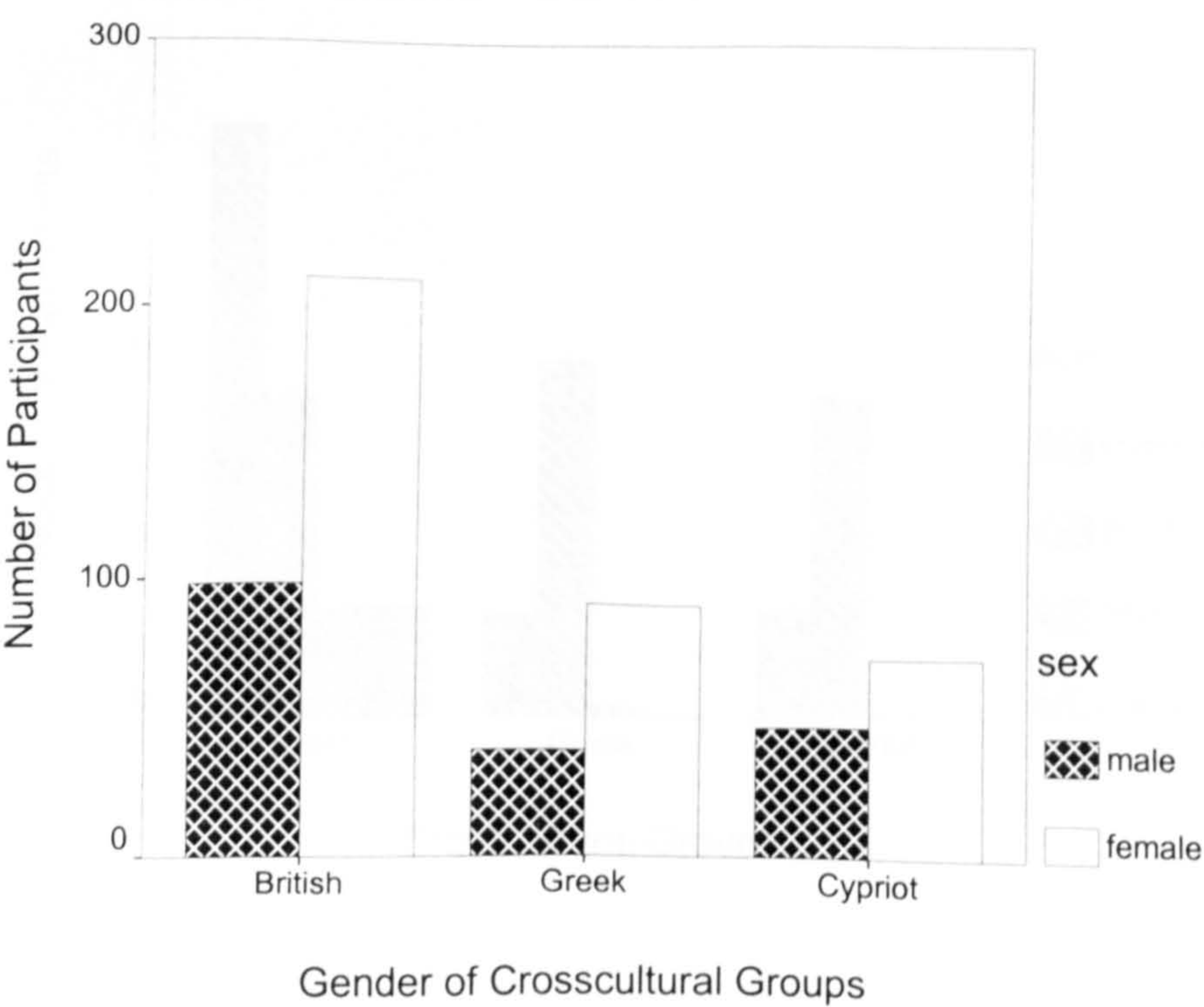




Table 11-20 Distribution of Age Groups in

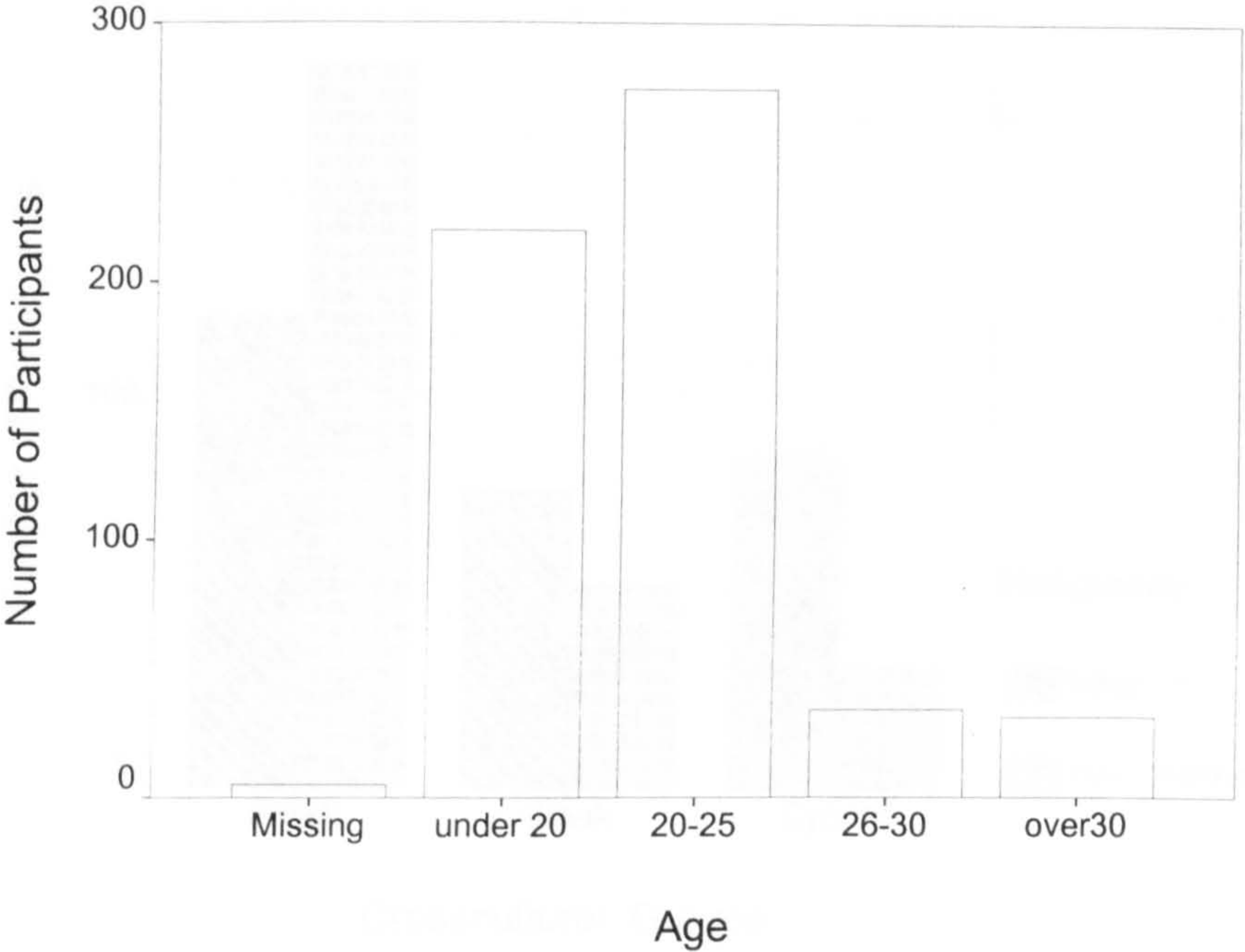


Table 11-21. Numbers in Each Age Group

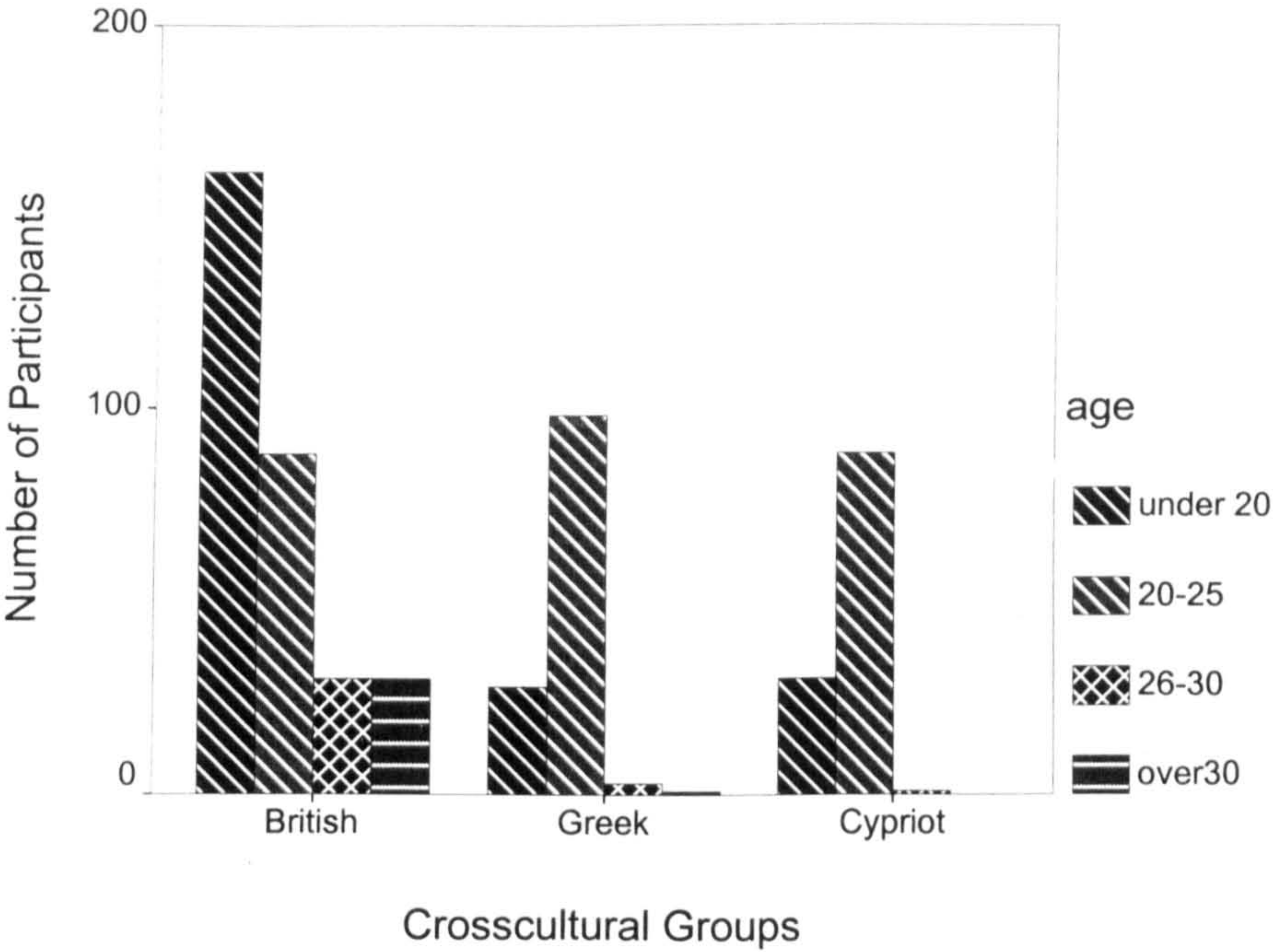


Table 11-22. Religious and Non-Religious

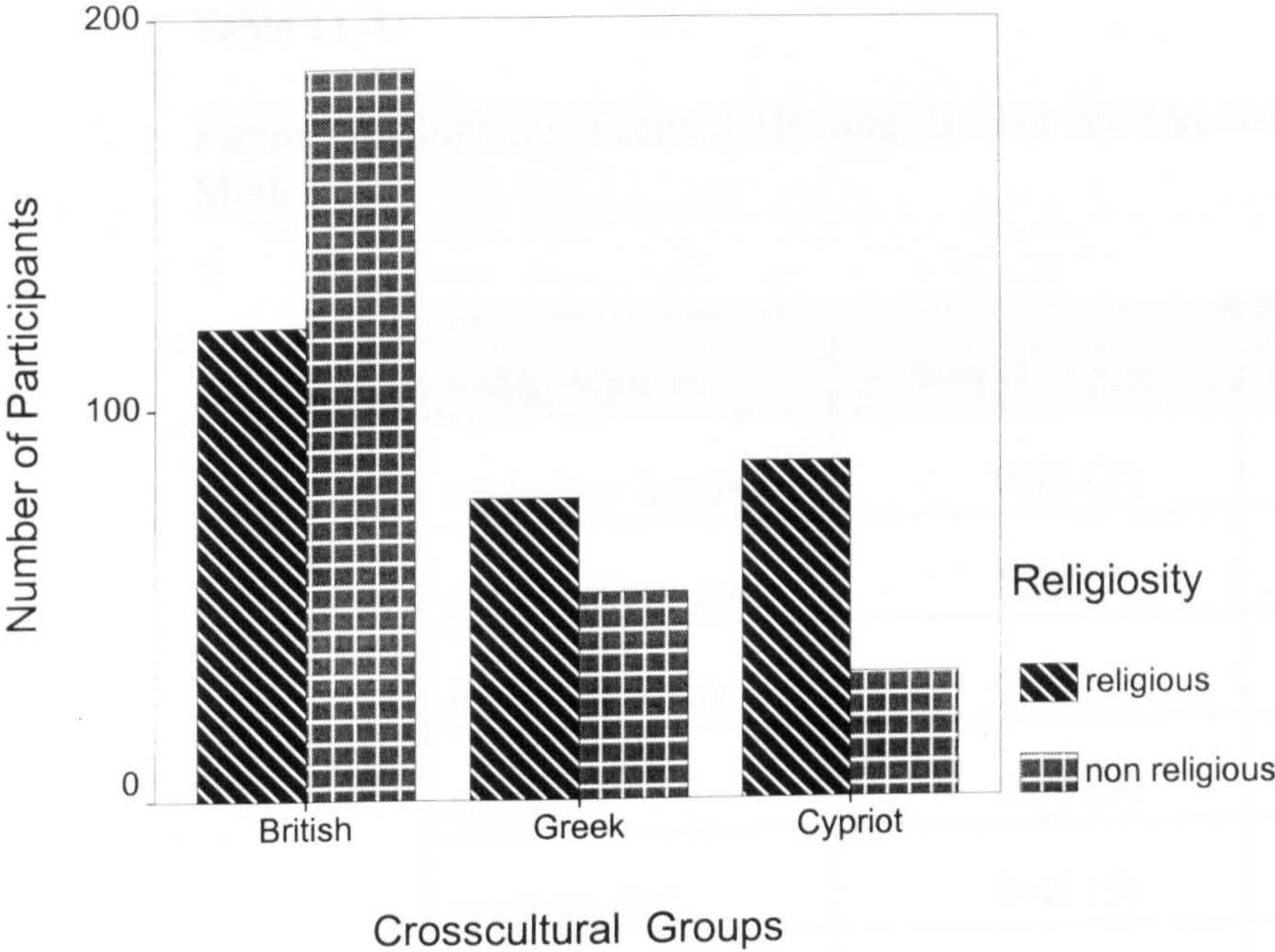




Table 11-4.

Factor Loadings for Factor 1 Healing: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiver Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>no longer hurting</i>	0.73 (1)	0.34
<i>set free from guilt</i>	0.59 (2)	0.25
<i>broken wounds...</i>	0.57 (3)	0.29
<i>set free</i>	0.44 (4)	0.78 (1)
<i>cease to feel...</i>	0.41 (5)	0.62 (2)
<i>amnesty</i>	0.19	0.42 (4)
<i>pardon</i>	0.25	0.40 (5)
<i>we must forgive...</i>	0.06	0.40 (5)
<i>feeling better...</i>	0.23	0.57 (3)
Variance % PC	18.1%	4.5%
Variance % P A	15.6%	2.2%



Table 11-5.

Factor Loadings for Factor 2 Condoning: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiver Mode

Factor Loadings for Factor 3 Relationship: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiver Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Greek-speaking gp.	
		Cond.1	Cond. 2
<i>ignoring</i>	0.67 (1)	0.37(4)	0.70 (2)
<i>turning a blind eye</i>	0.64 (2)	0.65 (1)	0.25
<i>overlooking</i>	0.64 (3)	0.31	0.56 (5)
<i>as if it never...</i>	0.46 (4)	0.36 (5)	0.63 (4)
<i>remit/cancel...</i>	0.37 (5)	0.61 (2)	0.20
<i>patch up...</i>	0.05	0.45 (3)	0.09
<i>wipe the slate...</i>	0.09	0.29	0.71 (1)
<i>amnesty...</i>	0.08	0.27	0.42
<i>no longer hurting</i>	0.11	0.04	0.68 (3)
Variance % PC	10.1%	7.4%	6.2%
Variance % PA	7.8	5.2%	4.0

The Condoning component for the Greek-speaking group is comprised of two separate factors compared to the British single factor.



Table 11-6.

Factor Loadings for Factor 3 Relationships: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiver Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>restore...</i>	0.84 (1)	0.58 (3)
<i>patch up...</i>	0.76 (2)	0.09
<i>a new start</i>	0.37 (3)	0.64 (1)
<i>kiss and make-up</i>	0.37 (4)	0.36
<i>broken wounds...</i>	0.29 (5)	0.63 (2)
<i>set free</i>	0.12	0.47 (4)
<i>pardon</i>	0.11	0.46 (5)
<i>shake hands</i>	0.09	0.42
Variance % PC	6.8%	5.4%
Variance % PA	4.7%	3.1%

Table 11-7.

Factor Loadings for Factor 4 Religious: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiver Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>God forgives us...</i>	0.68 (1)	0.57 (1)
<i>we must forgive...</i>	0.65 (2)	0.31 (5)
<i>love keeps no...</i>	0.50 (3)	0.36 (4)
<i>wipe the slate...</i>	0.36 (4)	0.18
<i>a new start</i>	0.34 (5)	0.01
<i>shake hands</i>	0.20	0.39 (3)
<i>as if it never...</i>	0.30	0.43 (2)
Variance % PC	6.4%	4.2%
Variance % PA	4.0%	2.1%



Table 11-8.  
Factor Loadings for Factor 5 Legal: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiver Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group	
		Cond.1	Cond.2
<i>amnesty</i>	-0.62 (1)	0.27	0.42
<i>pardon</i>	-0.40 (2)	0.14	0.36
<i>shake hands</i>	-0.33 (3)	0.19	0.27
<i>acquit</i>	-0.25	0.19	0.22
<i>ignoring</i>	0.04	0.37 (4)	0.70 (2)
<i>turning a blind eye</i>	-0.07	0.65 (1)	0.25
<i>overlooking</i>	0.06	0.31	0.56 (5)
<i>as if it never...</i>	0.08	0.36 (5)	0.63 (4)
<i>remit/cancel</i>	-0.12	0.61 (2)	0.20
<i>patch up...</i>	-0.07	0.45 (3)	0.09
<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	-0.15	0.29	0.71 (1)
<i>no longer hurting</i>	0.11	.04	0.68 (3)
Variance % PC	5.6%	7.4%	6.2%
Variance % PA	3.1%	5.2%	4.0%



Table 11-9.

Factor Loadings for Factor 6 New Beginning: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiver Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>bury the hatchet</i>	-0.56 (1)	0.62 (2)
<i>a new start</i>	-0.48 (2)	0.21
<i>shake hands</i>	-0.47 (3)	0.47 (5)
<i>kiss and make-up</i>	-0.45 (4)	0.06
<i>feeling better...</i>	-0.44 (5)	0.43
<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	-0.38	0.36
<i>overlooking</i>	-0.37	0.50 (4)
<i>pardon</i>	-0.04	0.63 (1)
<i>amnesty</i>	-0.17	0.57 (3)
<i>cease to feel...</i>	-0.11	0.45
<i>ignoring</i>	-0.00	0.47 (5)
Variance % PC	5.0%	29.0%
Variance % PA	2.6%	26.9%



Table 11-10.

Factor Loadings for Factor 7 Guilt Reduction: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiver Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>cease to feel ...</i>	0.63 (1)	-0.35
<i>acquit</i>	0.50 (2)	-0.66 (2)
<i>set free</i>	0.49 (3)	-0.33
<i>pardon</i>	0.39 (4)	-0.20
<i>love keeps no...</i>	0.34 (5)	-0.68 (1)
<i>as if it never...</i>	0.20	-0.54 (5)
<i>kiss and make-up</i>	0.15	-0.57 (4)
<i>overlooking</i>	0.11	-0.59 (3)
Variance % PC	5.0%	5.1%
Variance % PA	2.4%	2.7%

Table 11-11.

Factor Loadings for Factor 1 Healing: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiven Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>no longer hurting</i>	0.84 (1)	0.50 (2)
<i>set free from guilt</i>	0.67 (2)	0.67 (1)
<i>broken wounds...</i>	0.56 (3)	0.29
<i>set free</i>	0.48 (4)	0.30 (4)
<i>cease to feel...</i>	0.35	0.22
<i>amnesty</i>	0.07	0.27
<i>pardon</i>	0.25	0.10
<i>we must forgive...</i>	0.13	0.10
<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	0.42 (5)	0.30 (4)
<i>feeling better...</i>	0.39	0.22
<i>remit/cancel</i>	0.01	0.34 (3)
Variance % PC	22.8%	5.6%
Variance % PA	20.6%	4.0%



Table 11-12.

Factor Loadings for Factor 2 Condoning: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiven Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group	
		C/L 1	C/L 2
<i>ignoring</i>	0.69 (2)	0.34	-0.83 (1)
<i>turning a blind eye</i>	0.74 (1)	0.75 (1)	-0.56 (6)
<i>overlooking</i>	0.64 (3)	0.42 (5)	-0.72 (4)
<i>as if it never...</i>	0.43 (4)	0.35	-0.78 (3)
<i>remit/cancel...</i>	0.40 (5)	0.68 (2)	-0.26
<i>patch up...</i>	0.07	0.55 (3)	-0.21
<i>wipe the slate...</i>	0.03	0.39	-0.79 (2)
<i>amnesty...</i>	0.21	0.25	-0.57 (5)
<i>no longer hurting</i>	0.16	0.25	-0.53
<i>acquit</i>	0.27	0.43 (4)	-0.44
Variance % PC	10.1%	9.4%	4.9%
Variance % PA	7.9%	7.5%	2.9%

Table 11-13.

Factor Loadings for Factor 3 Relationships: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiven Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>restore...</i>	0.80 (1)	0.75 (1)
<i>patch up...</i>	0.72 (2)	-0.03
<i>a new start</i>	0.52 (3)	0.68 (2)
<i>kiss and make-up</i>	0.52 (3)	0.31
<i>broken wounds...</i>	0.36	0.64 (3)
<i>set free</i>	0.29	0.41
<i>pardon</i>	0.22	0.61 (4)
<i>shake hands</i>	0.25	0.53 (5)
Variance % PC	5.8%	4.6%
Variance % PA	3.7%	2.7%



Table 11-14.

Factor Loadings for Factor 4 Religious: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiven Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>God forgives us...</i>	0.73 (1)	-0.40 (3)
<i>we must forgive...</i>	0.71 (2)	-0.48 (1)
<i>love keeps no...</i>	0.32 (3)	-0.01
<i>wipe the slate...</i>	0.26	-0.05
<i>a new start</i>	0.22	-0.12
<i>shake hands</i>	0.15	-0.19
<i>as if it never...</i>	0.14	-0.08
<i>kiss and make-up</i>	0.05	-0.42 (2)
Variance % PC	7.4%	4.2%
Variance % PA	5.4%	2.4%

Table 11-15.

Factor Loadings for Factor 5 Legal: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiven Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group	
		Cond.1	Cond.2
<i>amnesty</i>	0.59 (2)	0.25	-0.57 (5)
<i>pardon</i>	0.72 (1)	0.15	-0.35
<i>shake hands</i>	0.40 (3)	0.11	-0.39
<i>acquit</i>	0.32 (5)	0.43	-0.44
<i>ignoring</i>	0.13	0.34	-0.83 (1)
<i>turning a blind eye</i>	0.25	0.75 (1)	-0.56 (6)
<i>overlooking</i>	0.16	0.42 (4)	-0.72 (4)
<i>as if it never...</i>	0.20	0.35	-0.78 (3)
<i>remit/cancel</i>	0.39 (4)	0.69 (2)	-0.26
<i>patch up...</i>	0.22	0.54 (3)	-0.21
<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	0.19	0.39 (5)	-0.79 (2)
<i>no longer hurting</i>	0.17	0.25	-0.53
Variance % PC	5.3%	9.4%	4.9%
Variance % PA	3.2%	7.5%	2.9%

Cond. = Condoning



Table 11-16.

Factor Loadings for Factor 6 New Beginning: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiven Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>bury the hatchet</i>	-0.67 (1)	0.56
<i>a new start</i>	-0.53 (2)	0.48
<i>shake hands</i>	-0.22	0.65 (4)
<i>kiss and make-up</i>	-0.38	0.32
<i>feeling better...</i>	-0.50 (3)	0.68 (3)
<i>wipe the slate clean</i>	-0.47 (4)	0.35
<i>overlooking</i>	-0.20	0.44
<i>set free</i>	-0.47 (4)	0.75 (2)
<i>pardon</i>	-0.22	0.63 (5)
<i>acquit</i>	-0.41	0.47
<i>amnesty</i>	-0.19	0.48
<i>cease to feel...</i>	-0.27	0.76 (1)
<i>ignoring</i>	-0.11	0.41
Variance % PC	4.7%	35.1%
Variance % PA	2.6%	33.3%

Table 11-17.

Factor Loadings for Factor 7 Guilt Reduction: British and Greek-speaking Groups in the Forgiven Mode

Focus Phrase	British group	Gk-speaking group
<i>cease to feel ...</i>	-0.50 (3)	-0.45
<i>acquit</i>	-0.25	-0.57
<i>set free</i>	-0.49 (4)	-0.36
<i>pardon</i>	-0.22	-0.31
<i>love keeps no...</i>	-0.72 (1)	-0.86 (1)
<i>as if it never...</i>	-0.56 (2)	-0.47 (5)
<i>kiss and make-up</i>	-0.32	-0.48
<i>overlooking</i>	-0.27	-0.48
<i>set free from guilt</i>	-0.38 (5)	-0.19
Variance % PC	4.2%	3.6%
Variance % PA	1.9%	1.8%

